Different Worlds
ISSUE 24, SEPTEMBER 1982
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SPECIAL DWARF-MOSTAL ISSUE

Different Worlds

September 1982

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EDITORIAL

Dwarf (dworf), *sb* and *a.* Pl. -fs; A human being much below the ordinary stature or size . . . One of a supposed race of diminutive beings, who figure in Teutonic and esp. Scandinavian mythology and folk-lore; often identified with the elves, and supposed to be endowed with special skill in working metals, etc. – *Oxford English Dictionary*.

Welcome to the Special Mostal Issue. Originally, we planned to feature articles about dwarfs in different role-playing systems but somewhere along the way the Gloranthan-*RuneQuest* dwarfs, called Mostali, dug a pit under our plans and buried our intentions. Having found out that the Mostali are planning to take over the Universe we have published this issue's material to expose and foil their schemes.

Some of you may wonder about the spelling of the plural form for dwarf used by us in this issue. While there are two spellings – dwarves and dwarfs – in wide use, Poul Anderson indirectly pointed out to us that while the former was introduced by J. R. R. Tolkien as an attempt to streamline

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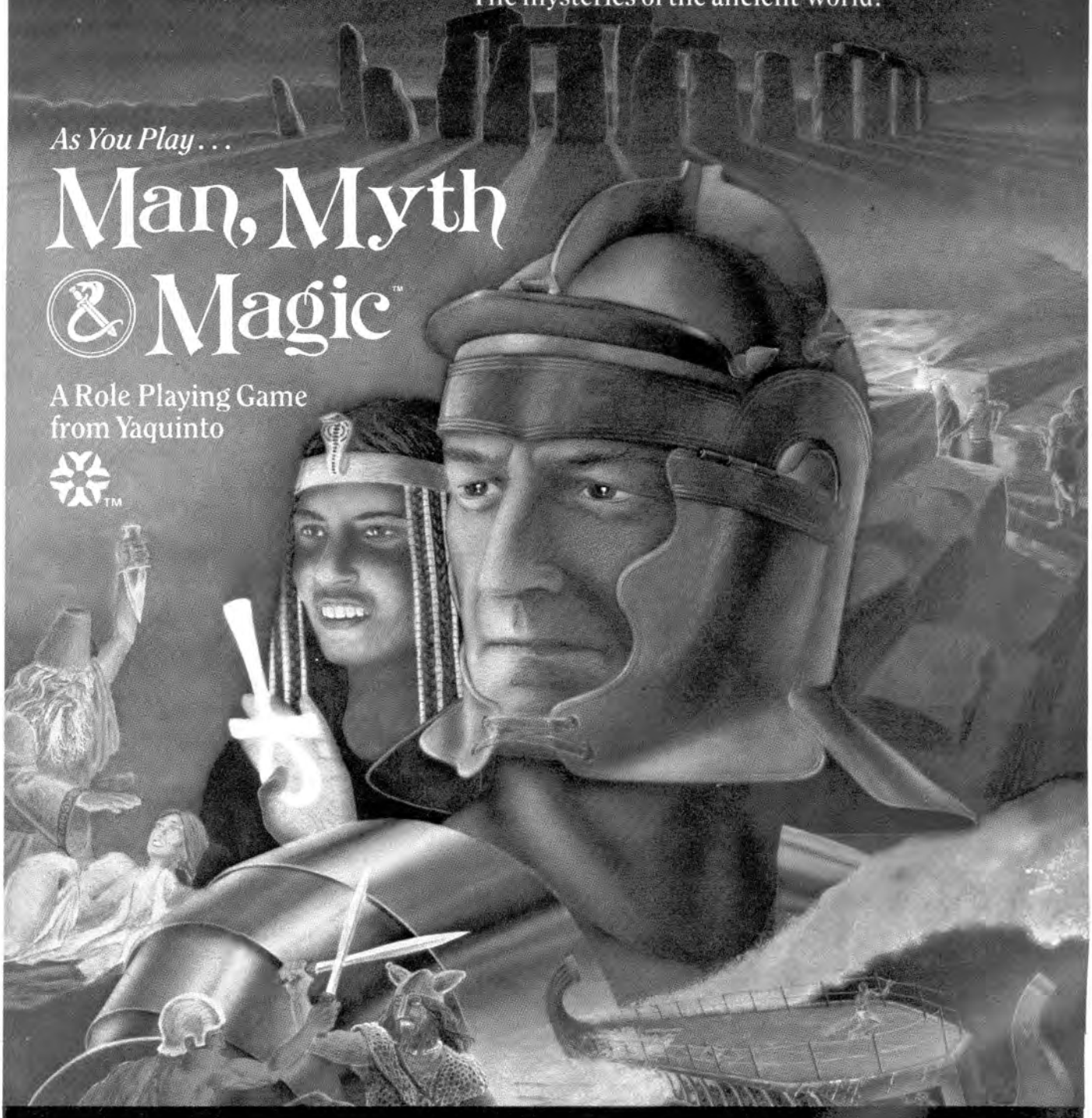

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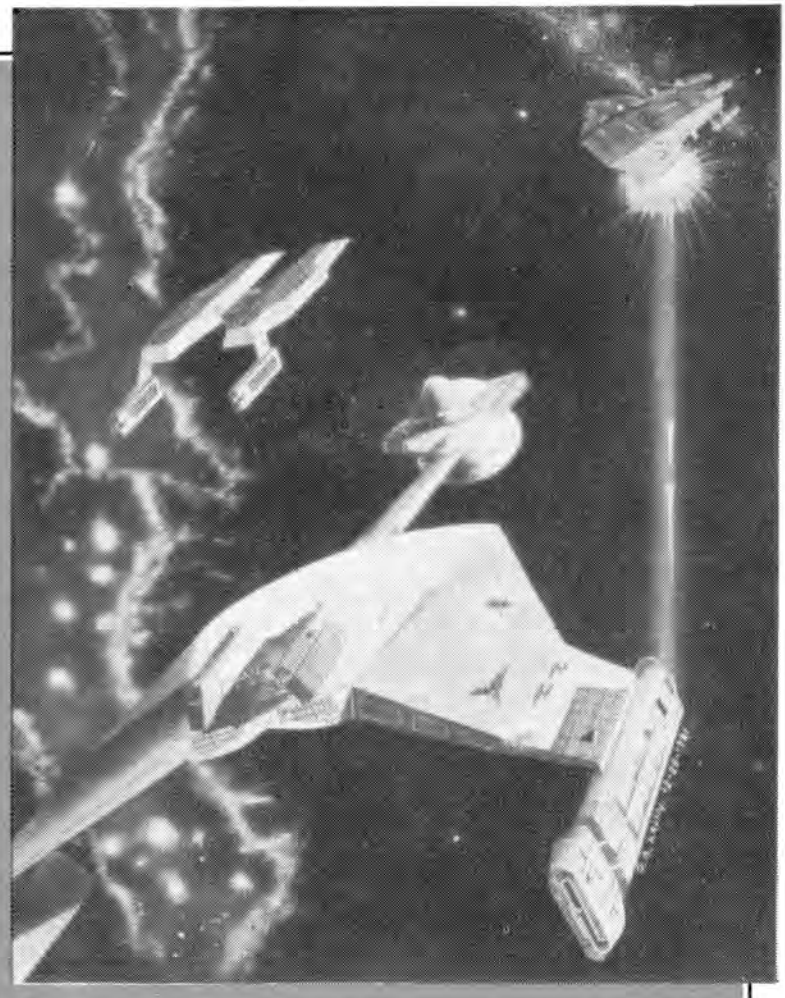

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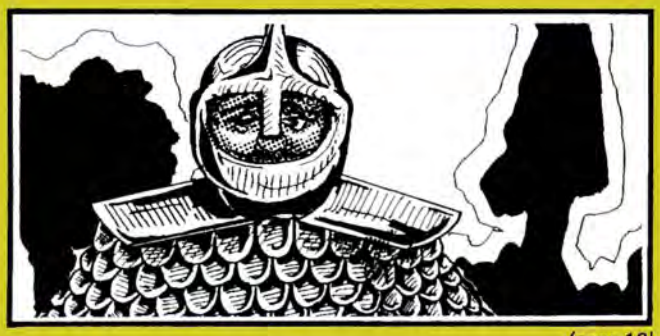
Issue 24 **SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE**



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Artists

FRONT COVER: by Brad W. Foster. this cover shows three Mostali-dwarfs working on their World Machine.

INTERIORS: David Dudley page 20; Brad W. Foster page 9; Jan Sherrel Gephardt page 30; Paul Jaqays page 35; Valerie Olson pages 10. 12; Luise Perenne pages 8, 15, 17, 18, 23, 32, 33.

the English language, the latter is still the preferred older version.

* * *

There has been a lot of talk about the future content of *Different Worlds* among our readers due to the demise of *Wyrms Footnotes*, our sister magazine. Some suggested that *Different Worlds* should now increase coverage of the *RuneQuest* role-playing system to fill the gap left by the passing of *Wyrms Footnotes*. While we plan to carry more articles related to *RuneQuest* and Chaosium role-playing games such as *Call of Cthulhu* and *Stormbringer*, we are also planning to maintain our format of providing articles useful to most gamesmasters and coverage of all role-playing games.

* * *

We will be having a number of future issues with special topics. Being planned are issues dealing with Cities, Worldbuilding and Campaign Creation, *D&D*, How to Be an Adventurer, and Norse Mythology.

Yurek Chodak

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DIFFERENT VIEWS

LETTERS COLUMN

Regarding Different Worlds 21

Who do you think you are, taking a good game like *Stormbringer* and messing it up like that article on pages 24 to 29?

First of all, it shouldn't be like "Make Your Own Adventure" books. Even the adventure in the rulebook is better. Second, no one is going to play Elric (that's like playing Odin in *D&D*). And finally, I read the first book and Elric doesn't have "demon armor."

But *DW 21* still has some good things about it. Like "Pistols." And Metal Marvels.

I would also like to make a few comments on *DW 20*. The article "Zarzeena's World" was very well done. (Good going Steve.)

But everything has its faults. "Giving Birth" was awful! It seems like it was just to fill up space.

Dylan Williams
Seoul, Korea

How Long have You Been Gaming?

You know what age gamers are becoming when you see an article on "Giving Birth" in *DW* (issue 20).

Joseph Beth
Bethlehem, PA

Too Much Backbiting?

I recently attended Origins '82 in Baltimore. I enjoyed the friendly, convivial spirit that permeated the whole weekend. Just about everyone was chatting and glad-handing, and amiable. But, as I listened to exhibitors talking, I heard things that pointed to a contradiction of spirit that prompts this letter.

Why the propensity to gyp thy neighbor, guys? In the last few months I've heard nothing but saber-rattling from SJG, Metagaming, Dave Arneson, and TSR. And now Wilf Backhaus tells me that *C&S* has been rewritten and re-packaged without his approval. Now that may be well within that company's contractual rights, but can you see how unfair that looks to the consumer? Almost weekly I learn of some company trying to put it to some other company. What's the reason for this?

Can't transactions be handled graciously, without resorting to the United States Judicial System? Recently Chaosium and Eon Games came out with a product called Borderlands. We might assume that one of these companies had an earlier copyright to the name, and could have legitimately forced the other product off the market to be re-packaged. (This is similar to what happened when TSR printed material that was copyrighted by Chaosium.) Happily, the two companies resolved the problem with a few phone calls, and both products came out on schedule.

I know there are times when one must resort to a lawsuit to get results. There will always be people who attempt to make it rich on other people's work, but do you really believe that our industry is overrun with such people? Your lawsuits *ad infinitum* would suggest this. It is petty and childish to solve every problem by running to court, just as it is cruel and unethical to take advantage of the kindnesses that are characteristic of our industry.

For the industry's sake, let's get back to fair dealing. The only people who win in such squabbling situations are the lawyers. In a personality-oriented business such as ours, it is easy to unwittingly insult. Let's own up to the Good Guy image that our fans see us in.

Scot Fritz
President,
Lehigh Area Role-Gaming Ass.
Allentown, PA

RuneQuest Weapons Change

A few items on my "Eight New Weapons" (*DW* 22). First, thanks to Vince Edwards for the excellent illustrations accompanying the article. Next, three corrections: first, I stated atlatls were not used militarily, suspecting that they were but lacking proof. I have since found that they were definitely used by the Mayas and I still suspect (but have no original source evidence) that they were also used by the Aztec armies. Incidentally, both of those excelled in the dragonewt favorite, the klanth. The second error was probably an attempt to correct my spelling. Under caltrops in ambush, last line, the word is *gantlet*, a double line of armed men to be run as a punishment or ordeal. The only thing that can run a gauntlet (a heavy glove) is an insect or perhaps a nervous falcon. Finally, a typo in atlatl. It takes *no* longer to hook up the atlatl than to find the balance point of a regular javelin. The "no" got lost. Just grab the spear anywhere and lay it on the atlatl, grasp with a finger or two, cock, and throw. No balance point needed.

Paul Cardwell, Jr.
Bonham, TX

Battle Report from the "Spectre"

I really enjoyed running that "Spectre" *Traveller* scenario in *DW 20* for my players. Those pesky security robots bothered the team just enough that they never reached room 26. Imagine their surprised faces when I told them they had been blown to smithereens! BOOM!

Milton Steele
Moscow, ID

On Issue 22

About *DW 22*. I'm not sure this was really a *RQ* issue ... there were more non-*RQ* feature pages than *RQ* feature pages. The Eight New Weapons was a good article, and useful too. Runefix shows that our local campaigns are a bit different in direction than the Chaosium campaign. It all made sense, though, and I'm glad that Greg recommended the changes, rather than decreeing them. The Cult of Dionysus was interesting, but I guess I was a bit disappointed that they had no special abilities (ones not already mentioned in another cult). Though I'm not sure they'd be quite appropriate for a low-power Greek campaign. Rurik didn't have a lot of new information, but it was nice to see the column.

The Terraforming article was interesting, but I really wanted to see how the terraforming is done, not how the company's organized. Part 2 will have this, I hope. The *T&T* scenario seemed overlong. About half as much would have given the same flavor. There were several errors with paragraph numbering. 28B directs you to 29A, but it should be 29H. 27E says go to 12? *Editor's note: 27E goes to 26B.*

The rest of the features were pretty good. Larry DiTillio had too long an introduction in Sword of Hollywood.

The art was pretty good. It looks like everything was commissioned, though. In some ways this is good, but I don't mind seeing random, related pictures. Oh, the cover was rather nice. What happened to your logo, the vortex? I guess this cover looks more professional, or something.

David Dunham
San Antonio, TX

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SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE

DWARFS

by Poul Anderson

The race of the dwarfs in Dvalin's throng
Down to Lofar the list I must tell;
The rocks they left, and through wet fields
They sought a home in the fields of sand.
– Elder Edda (H. A. Bellows trans.)

Few creatures of myth and legend have been more powerful and enduring than the Northern dwarfs. Long after the gods of Asgardh were forsaken and the elves had dwindled away into mere fairies, the stumpy dwellers below the earth remained masters of magic. Even in our age, and despite everything Walt Disney could do, J. R. R. Tolkien had no difficulty in reviving them as formidable beings. There have been other modern versions, perhaps most notably the Picts in stories by Rudyard Kipling and Robert E. Howard. ("We are the Little Folk – we!") As a matter of archaelogical fact, the Picts were rather tall, but their representation as runts bestowed a sinister forcefulness upon our image of them, not unlike the concept of the Japanese that prevailed in America during World War II.

Clearly, we touch on some kind of archetype here. The question is what kind. I have no answer to that, but will offer a few ideas.

Diminutive humans exist in reality, of course. It now seems that when they occur as an entire race, like the African pygmies, this is more a result of nutrition than of genetics. Certainly the present generation of Japanese is much larger than its parents, just as JapaneseAmericans outgrew their own forebears – or, as far as that goes, Western people in general have gained several inches of height during the past couple of centuries.

Granted, hereditary factors do count. A Norwegian-American is likely to tower above an Italian-American. Such differences made various stocks, meeting for the first time in the distant past, seem doubly alien to each other. Thus the Nordics of early Scandinavia attributed dark powers of sorcery to the short Lapps and, by extension, the Finns: a superstition which persisted into living memory among sailors, who often believed that a Finnish shipmate would be a Jonah. Since the Lapps had no chroniclers, and the Finns none until they had been subjugated by the Swedes, we do not know what they in their turn thought of the Nordics, but it was doubtless uncomplimentary.

So normal variations in stature among distinct human stocks must be one source of the dwarf myth. However, this cannot be all.

Dwarfs of several kinds appear in every race, victims of biological accidents. (Giants do too.) Their history is long, intricate, and fascinating. Frequently they have made their livings as showpieces or entertainers. Indeed, from time to time they have been in such demand in this role that they were not only recruited or imported – the expedition that Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt sent to the land of Punt brought home a dwarf, among other valuables – but artificially created. This was especially done by the Romans, who were a nasty people in numerous ways, but seems also to have happened occasionally in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance-Reformation era, when homunculi were believed to be assets to a wizard or an alchemist.

Hence the achondroplastic dwarf is obviously another root of the myth. Such a person has the short limbs, thick trunk, and big (actually normal-sized) head that we think of when we imagine a dwarf of fable. His or her kind today prefer the term "little people." Being entirely in sympathy with them, I'll go along with that. After all, they are as intelligent and capable as anyone else. For certain jobs, such as construction work in narrow spaces, they are better equipped than the rest of us.

With that much said, I will go on to the imaginary dwarf, adding only that the kind of empathy just mentioned is a fairly recent phenomenon. Formerly, anyone who was in any way different from the usual was considered abnormal and, in many societies, to have an element of the supernatural. This might be evil, in which case some poor old crone could get burned for being a witch, or might be good, in which case some epileptic, say, could become the local shaman or prophet.

Here we see another reason for the power of dwarfs. They are *strange*.

Not every people have been obsessed with the idea of them, but quite a few have been. Those that come to mind include the Polynesians and various North American Indian tribes. Ireland, the Celtic parts of Britain, and Brittany offer an interesting case, in that their "wee folk" appear to be former gods who have shrunk in stature as well as authority. However, the dwarfs are most conspicuous in German folklore and, still more, in Scandinavia. At least, those are the areas most familiar to me, and I will concentrate on them, especially the latter. Perhaps someone else can enlighten us about stories in other parts of the world.

We are all familiar with the medieval Germanic dwarf, as shown to us in the Grimm collections and elsewhere. He lives underground or off in the wilderness, alone or with a few relatives. He is certainly not domestic, like the Danish nisse or similar small beings that hang around human households. He may or may not have magical powers – to cast a curse or grant a wish – but if his occupation is mentioned, he is an artisan, not a farmer, herdsman, hunter, fisher, or lumberjack. He may be malignant or he may be benign, but it is always a terrible mistake to offend him. At the same time, except for being short-tempered, he is not as flighty as most sprites, but

tends rather to be stolid and long of memory. In spite of his size, he is physically strong. While not exactly of brilliant intellect, he is seldom stupid, and often he has a great deal of cunning, knowledge, or wisdom.

This person reminds me considerably of Völund the smith, or Wayland as he is called in English. Originally a ranger of the woods and lover of a valkyrie, he was captured, hamstrung, and enslaved by a king, who had him make all sorts of wonderful things that nobody else could. At last Völund took a fearful revenge. He slew the king's young sons and made drinking bowls of their skulls, which were unwittingly used at the royal table; he raped the queen's daughter and got her pregnant; having fashioned a pair of wings for himself, he taunted his master with the tale of what he had done, and then flew off.

To some extent his story, like that of the giantesses Fenja and Menja who turned the world-quern Grotti, may well express the endless anger of the thrall class. Yet there is more to it than that. I think not only of Daedalus, but of Hephaistos, the lame smith of the Greek gods, whom the Romans called Vulcan. Might these tales have travelled northward along the amber trade route? Or, maybe, southward?

Surely the association of craftsmanship with physical handicaps — and in most situations, dwarfism is a handicap — has ancient and very practical reasons. Folk at a primitive level of technology need every working hand they can get. If you aren't able to hunt or till the fields, you'd better become a smith or a weaver or something like that ... maybe even a medicine man. In the course of millenia there may have been a consequential genetic selection effect, tending to make individuals with certain innate problems, such as dwarfs or the nearsighted, a bit more intelligent on average than their fortunate kindred. This would reinforce the impression that their kind had magical abilities.

Be that as it may — and it is only a speculation — the dwarfs were especially potent in heathen Scandinavia; the medieval versions are rather pale by contrast. Perhaps dwarfs were equally significant to the pre-Christian Germans, English, and others, but we don't have records of that. We are lucky to possess the Eddas and sagas, and they are maddeningly incomplete.

As far as we can tell, the dwafs and elves were originally closely related, both tutelary spirits of various areas, much like Japanese kami, Arabic djinn, or Classical nymphs. The gods of Asgardh entered later and never actually displaced them; rather, they were integral to the whole mythology that developed.

(The prototypes of those gods were Indo-European, arriving as part of the general "Aryan" influx. In my opinion, which not everybody shares, that influx reached Scandinavia about 1800 B.C., at the end of the Neolithic period, and its bearers were the so-called Battle Axe people; but this was not so much a physical invasion as it was the coming of a new set of ideas and techniques. For a modern analogue, consider how such concepts and ways of life as Christianity, Islam, science, and high-energy technology have spread around the world without usually involving wholesale migrations.)

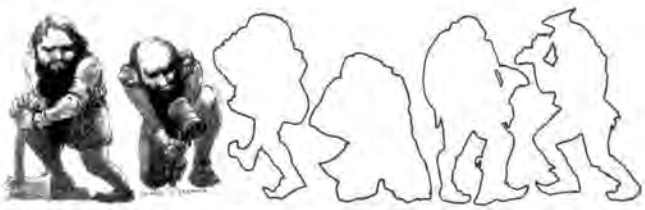
The Eddas refer to "light elves" and "black elves," with the implication that the latter were the dwarfs. However, the former became, for the most part, servants in Asgardh, and scarcely figure in the stories or poems, whereas the dwarfs not only kept their independence, they were powers to reckon with. You recall how a pair of them crafted the chief treasures of the gods, including Odhinn's ring and Thor's hammer. The gods could not compel them to do this, either, but had to persuade them. Another tale relates how Thor must trick a dwarf, a prospective son-in-law he did not want, by engaging him in a riddling contest till the sun rose and turned him to stone; had it been a giant, Thor would presumably just have killed him out of hand. Still another story tells how two dwarfs were forced by a spell to forge the invincible sword Tyrfing, but laid on it such a curse that it destroyed every possessor for generations afterward.

Tantalizing hints exist of an even greater part that the dwarfs may have had in the Old Norse mind. It is said that the earth rests on the backs of four of them. As the epigraph to this essay shows, they appear at one time to have migrated, but we do not know more than that. At the end of the world, says the prophetess of the Voluspá, "Loud roar the dwarfs/ by the doors of stone,// The masters of the rocks" — and is this only a detail, to add vividness to the poem, or does it bespeak something more deep?

I think myth, in a broad sense of the word, is as vital to humankind as the right sorts of food are. For a few of us today, science provides it, in a magnificent cosmic vision that gives meaning to the whole universe; but for all too many, science is not readily understandable in any real way, while traditional religion is no longer believable. People find themselves myth-impoverished, and it is no wonder that they turn to every sort of absurdity, from Marxism to astrology and psionics. I do not suppose this state of affairs can go on forever. Man will find an emotionally satisfying world-view again. I hope, myself, that it will be the scientific one, or at least incorporate true science. Meanwhile, though ... is it entirely coincidental that, among the superstitions, the crews of flying saucers are commonly described as *little* green men? □

Illustration by Brad W Foster

Numbering System by Luise Perenne



SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE

Why I Dislike Mostali

by Greg Stafford

"The only person who would ever envy a dwarf is someone who hates good food, good work, and good cheer.
– Sartar proverb

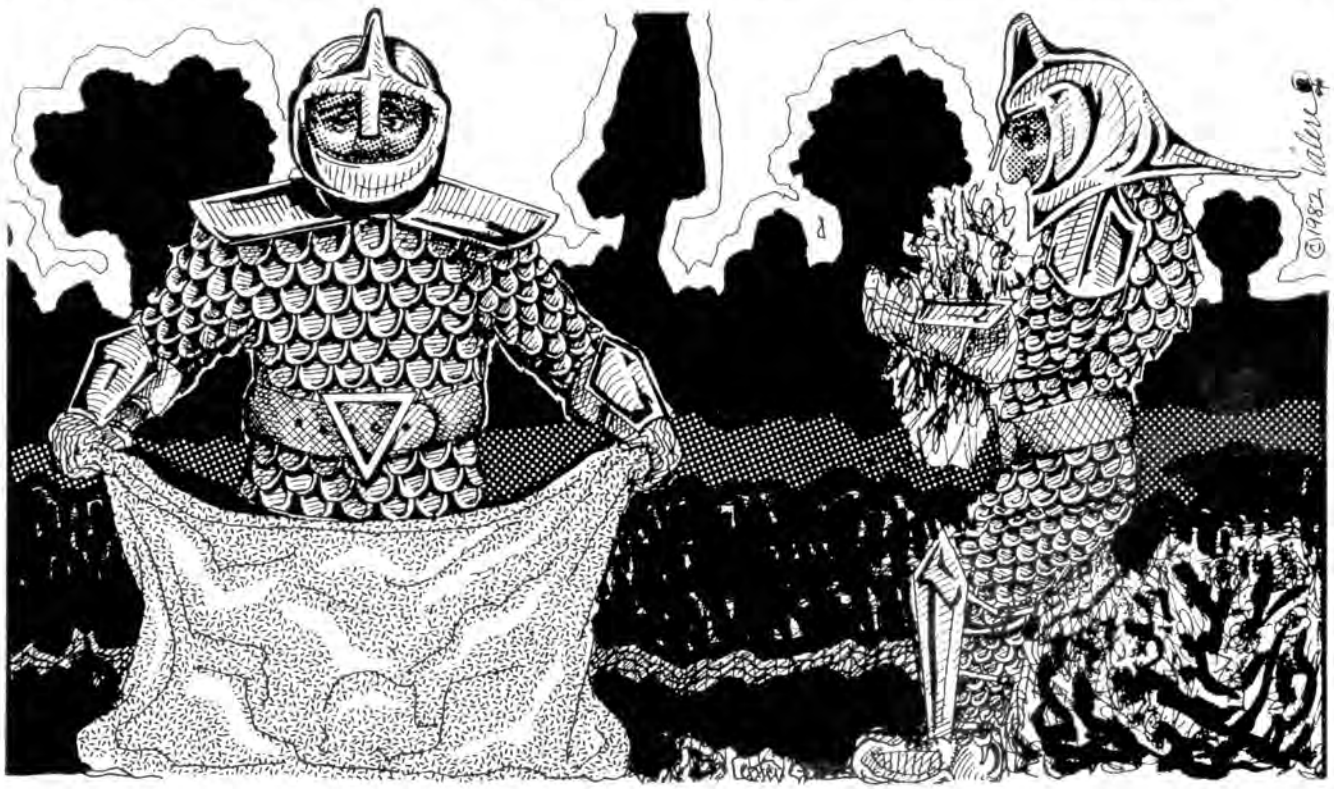
The world of Glorantha, first seen in *RuneQuest* and subsequently in other publications, has attracted popularity in its own right. I, as Prime Mover of that world, am always pleased and gratified to find it so.

One irritant to me is that I have only so much time to devote to chronicling the endless details of Glorantha. This is as frustrating to me as it is to the numberless people who clamor for details on this, maps of that, and records for over there. I plod along as best I can, assembling my ancient notes into an intelligent order and then filling in the gaps I perceive. Despite massive impatience, most people seem to agree to the schedule I have chosen. Except for one portion of the world which seems absent: the Mostali, or Dwarfs.

The Gloranthan equivalent of dwarfs is still largely undescribed. After the attention lavished on those vegetable elves and hillbilly trolls, everyone expects equal time for the rocky dwarves. They seem much sought after for use as both PCs and NPCs. A growing clamor has been raised to reveal the Gloranthan truth about them, no matter what.

The truth is, I don't like the Mostali very much. They have admirable characteristics, especially according to their own standards. But to me, a wild man of the Gloranthan wilderness, the admiration for dwarfs provokes little respect.

Dwarfs are too up-tight. The truth is, dwarfs who worship Mostal view themselves only as cogs in a great machine, immortal as long as they do not change themselves from their mechanical way of life. They take their



Dwarfs Out Foraging by Valerie Olson

belief to excess. To the dwarfs, Mostal is The Cosmic Machine. They are the descendants of the Maker, The One who created and wound up the Machine, and are also His heirs and repairmen, via the almost extinct race of Godtime Mostali. Dwarfs have inherited the vast ancient works which drive the sun about the sky and regulate the movements of the stars and seasons. Their very existence is bound into that machine, philosophically if not actually.

The biggest advantage of their iron-bound belief is that dwarfs of the Mostal cult never die of old age or illness, as long as they *never* vary their lives from the strictest Mostal ways. Thus they are glad to embrace whatever life peddles them at their birth, just to live forever.

The Mostal cult pervades the dwarf culture to make it both religious and social in nature. Mostal is everything to the Mostali, and each of them strives to fulfill a perfect life in imitation of their god.

The mechanical structure of the Mostali way of life imposes over-structures in administrating the masses. This is an inherited bureaucracy, or caste, a very rigid social class structure. The rules, though, are welcomed by every dwarf in the cult. Their life is set for them in exactly the way their parents did it, and as long as they do not fail in their ancient way then they, too, can join the assembly line right there next to mom and dad, and grampa, and great-grandpa, and great great grandpa ... (I cannot go on.)

Dwarfs are born into castes named after each of the ancient Mostali races of metallic beings. Every metal has certain types of dwarfish jobs associated with it. For instance, the Stone Caste is associated with masonry, the Gold with jewelry making, the Quicksilver with alchemy, and so on. Thus they are called Gold Dwarfs, and so on. This is a job distinction and confers little real power or recognition to the individual.

However, some dwarfs who achieve notable perfection in their tasks may attain the status of Diamond Dwarf. This is the equivalent of Rune lord or priest in other cults. Thus there are Diamond Gold Dwarfs, Diamond Silver Dwarfs, and so on.

Mostal, the ancient god, is usually titled Maker. This is in opposition to the Grower, a vague philosophical entity which was later identified with Aldrya, goddess of the woods. The contrast is important, and accounts for some of the marked obstinance between the dwarf and elf races. However, even without any elves the dwarfs are exultant in being the Makers of the world.

Dwarfs make things well. They prefer everything to be made rather than grown, and to remake any grown thing is to improve it. They scorn anything which is organic.

Food is an excellent example. The preferred dwarf food is a manufactured, super-processed, genuine imitation food-like product called Alpha Red, Beta Green, Gamma Yellow, and Monthly Stew. The process of making this is a sacred secret of an alchemical cult called the Food Processors. Dwarfs love their food and have hundreds of cookbooks to follow in preparing it.

Dwarf dietary habits do not stop here, and they get worse! The Alpha foods are the best for dwarfs, with the most return in calories and essential minerals per volume of food consumed. The Beta is second best, while the Gamma is considered a poor third. Monthly stew changes every 48 days, with no apparent order to its contents, and never with any contents listed.

All of these come out of machines and are canned (of course). They are processed organic and mineral matter. The Alpha is processed dwarf, the Beta is human, and the Gamma is elf. All else goes into the Monthly Stew.

This fact is not known to anyone on all of Glorantha except the dwarf Quicksilver specialists, the Food Processors, and the worst gossip-mongers, of course. I provide it for education and enlightenment, but it is not something any PC would ever know.

Non-dwarfs all agree that dwarf food is nutritious and (usually) digestable. This agreement includes humans, elves, dragonewts, and even trolls. However, all the food tastes terrible, except to dwarfs.

Mostali worshipers all know how bad non-processed food is. In fact, many have been forced to eat organic foodstuffs in dire emergencies (although others preferred to starve rather than face such a humiliating experience.) However, these creatures universally lack the slightest knowledge of anything about food choosing or preparation. Thus, whenever forced to fend for themselves they likely undergo a troubled meal similar to that described by an early Hendreiki explorer who returned from Dragon Pass with this story, c. 1470:

> "When mealtime began their leader insisted that they could fend for themselves. I believe he mistrusted my food or intentions, despite the three weeks we had spent struggling together. He gruffly gave instructions to his followers who were seen to sigh deeply, but resigned themselves to their fate.
>
> "They went about, gathering all types of plant leaves and insects. None seemed interested in trying to catch anything warm or meaty. Then they threw it all into a sack they carried, and each man reached in with his left hand and drew forth a mass of branches and crawling things. With his right he guzzled some potion, then stuffed the mess into his maw and mournfully began chewing like some bovine set to graze. Some of them ate it all, most spat much of it out, and some became quite ill from it despite their potions. None ate much. We nearly had a row when Jeems could not stop laughing at them, but our common cause held us together despite the youth's indiscretion."

Dwarfs are but rarely seen by outsiders anymore. Since the old wars they have withdrawn almost completely from contact with mankind. Some old places are kept, more like outposts or curiosities than the thriving metropolises they used to be. Any dwarfs sighted are often Iron Dwarfs, which has also distorted many impressions concerning this race.

The preferred dwarf foods are manufactured, super-processed, genuine imitation food-like products called Alpha Red, Beta Green, Gamma Yellow, and Monthly Stew.

The Iron Dwarfs worship, or claim descent from, that metal. Iron is not a natural mineral, but was invented by the Mostali race as a Bearer of Death in the Gods War. It was made specifically against their traditional foes, trolls and elves. Many people since then have heard ancient Mostali claim that they would have made it work against humans too, if they had known what would happen.

Iron Dwarfs are of two types. The priests and their ilk are Makers of Iron. They are the blacksmiths and they once held the secret of working iron inviolate until robbed by the Third Eye Blue people of the land of Fronela many centuries ago. The Rune lords are Makers of Death, and they avenged their priestly comrades years ago, so that people now have only a small part of the Iron God's secrets. For instance, mankind can make iron swords, but they did not learn the art of making iron firearms.

Iron was invented to serve as a weapon of the dwarfs, and as armor. The Iron Dwarfs are the armor of the dwarf face, shielding all the softer peoples deep in their subterranean world from the ravages of the wicked outer world. Dwarfs believe that their Cosmic Machine was broken in the Gods War, and they will not think their lot will improve until it is all fixed again. This will not occur soon, and the dwarfs are patient, believing that the Gods War is still on. Thus they stand fast, in their retreats, and leave the Iron Dwarfs to face the outer world.

If dwarfs are strict, Iron Dwarfs are even more stern and steadfast. They are usually quite paranoid about their safety, and rightly so. They go clanking about in the most coveted metal in the world, iron, and their arrogance and unyielding ways often provoke hostility where softer words would have been better. But only the best of their crop bother going above ground, and only in an emergency. The rest of the time they simply use their vast system of underground tunnels.

Dwarfs say they can get anywhere in the world through their tunnels. This might be so, for they have been known to tunnel under the floor of the Palace of the Winds, which floats in the air. (This would require mystical tunnels, quite rare except to Heroquesters.) Most tunnels are through solid earth and rock, linking their mines and shops together for whatever small community interaction they need.

Dwarfs are perfectly suited for tunnel living, and their senses show a terrible deficiency in the open air. Thus, they try to never leave their fastnesses. This sometimes forces them to engage in terrible fights with other underground species, but most of those are driven back or else pose only a few occasional problems. Krarsht, for instance, was once a problem, but now the once-mighty Krarsht labyrinth in the Jord Mountains is occupied by a dwarf city.

Dwarf religion does not believe in any afterlife worth mentioning. Death is unnatural and something to fear and hate. When a body is without its life energy for seven days, the soul force returns to Ty Kora Tek's empty, formless underground cavern where it is processed back into the raw energy of Mostal. The energy is used in many ways, and may again vitalize a manufactured dwarf body. The empty body is returned to the alchemists for return to the appropriate container and separated into its elements for other uses.

With such a future for failure, is it any wonder that dwarfs have a reputation for determined conservatism, strict traditionalism, and iron-clad legalism? And, for that matter, a certain type of frenzied dwarfish fanaticism?

Dwarfs Getting Rich by Valerie Olson

Dwarfs are quite fanatical about defending their sacred ways, and their long memories will never let them forget any slight which has thrown them off-schedule in repairing their wondrous machine. The Third Eye Blue people, for instance, were once rulers of Fronela (so they say), but were overthrown by dwarf-supported humans who resented the theft of iron-working secrets by the Third Eye Blue Founder hero in a previous age. Alchemical secrets have oft been

stolen from them, so they despise and hate all human alchemists, even those who worship Mostal or his son, Quicksilver the Alchemist. Dwarfs consider those humans to be impious robbers, and will barely cooperate with them, if at all.

Despite these, working iron and alchemy are both quite common now, and it is possible that other dwarf secrets can be stolen and disseminated. Most people, though, are too wise to want the most powerful of the legendary dwarf artifacts, such as mastership of the Cannon Cult or the Alchemical Transformer. These artifacts are far, far beyond the ken of any normal Gloranthan, and their awesome devastating mystery is both frightening and alien. Not only that, but not even the dwarfs themselves can always maintain control over their wondrous workings.

The Jolanti races are a race of stone servants which were made by dwarfs to act as mass infantry for fighting chaos on the surface of the world. This race had an unusual aid from the true giants. Gonn Orta, a legendary figure now vanished from Gloranthan history, was instrumental in aiding in the revolt of the Jolanti, and the liberation of hundreds of them from the Nidan Mountains. This destruction opened the so-called High Llama Pass between Fronela and Ralios and ended dwarf/giant friendship forever. Neither dwarfs nor giants have ever told humans what it was really about. (Much to the discomfort of the dwarfs a band of Jolanti were later endowed with intelligence by a band of sympathetic, and cruel, elves.)

Dwarfs have made another race, too, diminutive instead of gigantic. These are the nilmergs, subintelligent miniature creatures, which are capable of performing one task and little else in life. They do not reproduce, but are manufactured. Whenever humans are found to have made a machine from their own genius, or (more likely) from plans stolen from Mostal, the dwarfs will send destructive nilmergs to inhabit it and make it function poorly, or not at all.

Dwarfs have other creatures to help them protect their possessions, too. One of the best known is the Gunpowder Gobbler. A horde of them appeared one time, and they ate much more than that arcane substance when they stampeded towards their prey. They have many hands and a great mouth, and they are very strong. Their appetite is enhanced by their eating the alchemical powder, and they get stronger from it as well. Thus, the more there is to eat, the hungrier and nastier one gets. Once it has eaten everything, it goes on a rampage. Many instances of Gobbler outbreaks are recorded, and most authorities are quite adamant about suppressing the development of, or even experimentation with, that alchemical powder in their districts.

The greatest single example of dwarfs defending their secrets was at the end of the Second Age, in the region now known as the Left Arm of the Holy Country. On an island in that archipelago was a band of rebellious, atheistic, genius scientists who had the protection of the Jrusteli God-learners. They developed a high technology for their era which was unsurpassed by any humans anywhere, and even threatened Mostali cosmic monopolies. The crowning insult was a factory which manufactured magical swords, the so-called Ibirios (brand) of swords, which had a permanently-activated Bladesharp 3 matrix on each one. This alarmed the Old Gods everywhere, and prophets across the world had simultaneous visions and instructions from their deities.

This was the start of the Machine Wars, a widespread epic which is the best-known single story concerning the downfall of the rules-bending Jrusteli empire. The factory town was an ultimate statement of certain Jrusteli philosophies and was claimed to be "the Godtime returned to earth." Such an era proved to be no idyll for the natives, though, for the Elder Races of trolls, elves, and dwarfs temporarily united (as in the Godtime) to destroy the blasphemers.

Many of the nations of that age immortalized their own parts in this epic. The dwarfs, as might be expected, did not expose the fact that they were behind it all until the very end when they marched in and seized the ruins, and with a small horde of slaves set to dismantling and marching the whole town away. What could not be moved was blown up, trapped, sown with phony devices and artifacts, and populated with monsters whose primary function was to destroy anyone who came with thoughts of rebuilding or researching this place. Then they put salts and acids on the ground and departed, the major victors of the fight where thousands of humans, elves, and trolls had laid down their lives for their own gods without reward.

Later on much of the equipment from the Machine City was seen to furnish the outfits for a pike and musket regiment which occasionally mustered out of Gemborg, a dwarf city in the Holy Country.

Everything which the dwarfs do is rigid and mechanical, unwilling to bend even in the face of necessity. This sort of action would make any normal human into a twisted psychological wreck, but for dwarfs it is their very inner nature. I cannot find it easy to begrudge an entire race of intelligent beings simply because their inner nature makes them disagreeable, so I do it with difficulty. I find their obsession with the mundane world to be pathetic, as if they are more interested in the rules of the game than the roles of the world. Their iron-bound attitudes make them all act like NPCs, even if they seem to have the chance to do otherwise. The few real Mostali who seem happy and free are called 'outlaws,' as in the case of Throndbal the trader, or 'whimsical' such as the ruler of Dwarf Mine in Dragon Pass, simply because he speaks to and aids humans.

Dwarfs' ... long memories will never let them forget any slight which has thrown them off-schedule in repairing their wondrous machine.

It is questionable if dwarfs even have souls, though they do have POW which works in every way like that of other peoples. Most of the splinter dwarf groups I have encountered are also quite disagreeable peoples, bound to their own beliefs or hopes. Only individuals seem to have a chance of truly breaking away, and entering into the realm of accepting their roles in the world as free players. □

SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE

Mostal-Dwarfs

mythos, magic, lore & heresies

BY GREG STAFFORD

Mostal is the major dwarf god in Glorantha, Greg Stafford's ***RuneQuest*** *campaign world. The Mostali are the dwarf followers of this god.*

The start of the Gods Age was a perfect moment. The essence of Being was experienced, and then spread through the cosmos. There were only a few deities, and they were all vast and perfect Powers, pure in their essence and purposes. They were called the Celestial Court, and they spread their powers upon the world of the future. They were so lofty in their purposes that it required another generation of deities to further manifest the new powers manifest by the couplings and joinings of the Celestial Court. The new deities were the Elementals, and also the *Burtae*, or Young Gods. These later generations are the deities who fought the Gods War and whose survivors are worshiped today.

Acos was a god of the Celestial Court. He was God of Law. He never changed. The world grew, and Acos instilled his law into it. Well ordered, the cosmos was made, and Acos strode across it to measure it.

Gata was a goddess of the Celestial Court, mother of elemental Earth. She met Acos on his travels, and as was the wont in those days, they found harmony and pleasure in each others' presence, and from their pleasures rose new agents to fill the world.

Two brother were born, Stone and Mostal. Ever since that time there has been Stone found deep within the earth, just as the meeting of the god and goddess was so deep in the past.

The god, Stone, in those days was a great and living being, full of joy and life force. It could move when it wanted to, and it could communicate with other things in the universe. Being a thing of earth, it could change its texture and density. The cold, hard stone of today is a sorry remainder of its former grandeur, and only the rare truestone fragment retains any of the former properties.

Mostal was the Maker. He delighted in taking materials and constructing something new from them. He made everything, or else taught others how to make them, but the three greatest of his inventions were the Mostali races, the Spike, and Helper, the first tool.

There were many races of Mostali, each related in some ways, and differing in others. All were made by Mostal and his children, and all have a humanoid. All had the same ideas and, with only minor exceptions, the same perceptions. Their differences are all related to their element of origin, and affect one perception skill and the occupation of the individuals.

First, Mostal scooped a depression from stone. This made the First Container, also called the Rock Bowl. Mostal crumbled rock into the container, and worked it with his mighty hands and his chants of power until the first Rock Mostali emerged. Mostal was so delighted with these new beings that he made many more from the Rock Bowl, and showed the Rock Mostali how to make more of themselves.

Then the Rock Mostali aided their god and sensitized his manipulation. They took raw rock and helped Mostal mold it until they made the Second Container, the Leaden Pot. Within its hollow, Mostal and his children worked and created the Lead Mostali. This race learned how to make themselves as well, and then turned to aid their creator.

The Lead Mostali and their father were more sensitive yet, and they molded the Third Container, the Quicksilver Alembic. From this came the Quicksilver (or Aluminum) Mostali. Each generation afterwards aided their father, and other races were made.

The Fourth Container was the Copper Kettle, the Fifth Container was the Tin Dipper, and the Sixth Container was the Cauldron of Brass. The Pan of Silver is the Seventh, and the Ewer of Gold is the Eighth.

Each of those containers was kept in a special place in Mostal's Laboratory, closely guarded and studied by the first of the Mostali races which strode from each. These eight individuals are often called the gods of their respective minerals.

These eight races of Mostali comprise the Octagony of Ancient Minerals. Along with Mostal, they are called the Immutable Metals, for nine is equal to 3 times itself, and three sides make an unchangeable shape: the Law Rune.

Other Mostali races were made later, and will be mentioned, but did not take part in this early construction of the world.

Tools are a mark of the Mostali. Mostal himself first made Helper, an implement also called Toolmaker. It made the other first tools which were used by the Mostali to further themselves in their trades.

The Spike is the third of the greatest creations of Mostal. The Spike is Mostal's name for the edifice which he and his creatures built out of Truestone to house the Celestial Court. Mostal and his crew worked hard, and

refined the living Truestone to become immutable Adamant, the mythical metal. They took the essence of Acos, living Law, and made it the primary tool which held the world together. Mostal seized the immortal nail, and pounded it through the layers of the world, unifying them into a single entity. The adamant Spike was at the center of the world, and for all outsiders, it appeared to be a single huge mountain, rising from the depths of the earth and piercing the sky. Under the earth it descended into the primal ocean, and its roots rested below the deepest dark pit of the Underworld. Within it lived the Celestial Court.

Within the Spike, Mostal and his minions proved their more subtle arts, making fine palaces, each appropriate to the immortal who resided there. Younger deities lived upon the slopes and pinnacles of the Spike, and there grew Aldrya, the first Plant, and there walked Hykim, the First Beast; and Grandfather Mortal, the first man. From that place, descendants spread into the rest of the world.

Mostal himself had his legendary laboratory within the Spike, and there dwelt all the Mostali at first, then most of them went forth as colonies into the world. They practiced their skills there, each making wonders for themselves or the gods, or else refining their work to make new tasks within their occupations.

Rock Mostali developed the skills of mining, quarrying, dressing, and building with stone. Later they developed sculpting as well. Lead Mostali invented plumbing, and later developed glass-making and working as well. The Quicksilver Mostali delighted at first in the fluid forms of minerals, learning of their changes, and then developed their own art of transmutations and created the art of alchemy. The Copper Mostali were all coppersmiths, making ornaments, implements, and the first coinage used in the world – clacks. Brass MOstali pride themselves in the useful utensils they make, first only tools but later the first weapons as well. Rich ornaments were the mainstay of the Silver and Gold Mostali.

This beauty and harmony was disrupted almost from the start. When Mostal was hard at work pounding the Spike deep into the world, the god Ratslaff tickled his nose and made one blow land imperfectly. That one fault is where Umath the Destroyer was born. Furthermore, boggles quickly infested the spike, especially plaguing the places where the children of Law lived. Boggles are spirits of Disorder that caused great distress to Acos' followers.

When the god Umath was born the peaceful world of the Mostali was broken. Umath was Change and Strength, a howling mindless force bent only on altering the world. At first the Mostali withdrew to their mountain fastness, shunning contact with the wrongness. But, this withdrawal of Law was no punishment to the outlaws who simply grew stronger instead. At one point, Umath and his sons set their muscles to work and tore the groaning sky from its place, and thrust it away from the earth. The bowl of the heavens, carefully placed by Mostal, was knocked atilt. The Machine was broken, and forces rallied to drive off the storm gods and reassert the Old Law. The Gods War was started.

The Mostali fought in many early battles, marching purposefully in the wake of Kargan Tor, War God of the Celestial Court. In those days a battle was decided by moral fortitude, numerical superiority, or by champions engaging in a contest of their arts. In those struggles the Mostali often carried the day, for they had all of those traits in plenty. For example, one time they engaged Vadrus, a storm god, in a contest pitting Quicksilver's changing ability against the wind's. Though the wind changed quickly, it could not come close to that range of mutations which Quicksilver could place upon simple chemical ingredients.

When Death entered the world, the Gods War took a fatal turn for the worse. Once begun, this power had no limits to its growth. The elves had it for a while, and they lost no time in showing their enemies how it worked. The elves placed Death in their sacred axe, an earth weapon, and slaughtered the Mostali. High King Elf bore it to the heart of Mostal's Palace and struck down the god there. Stone, brother of Mostal, was also slain, and so the gods of the Mostali were lost.

Illustrations by Luise Perenne

In council, the Octagony of Ancient Minerals decided to continue their creation to fortify themselves against the growing troubles. With their great skill and magic the council made the Ninth Container, the Crucible of Iron. Their occupation became to make articles of war. They also developed the skills of using those tools, and so Iron is now also the Mostali god of war.

Iron was made to fight against the greatest of the Mostali's foes: trolls

and elves. The metal was particularly effective against those two races. The Iron Mostali made axes, like that which slew their father, and swords, like those used by the storm gods; consciously imitating the most effective weapons they knew of. They then invented armor to protect themselves.

But the losses caused by Death were irreplaceable. At one point the Iron God led a force deep into the basements of the Spike, there discovering the abode of the dead and returning to his realm with as many as could escape. But this was not enough, for they were but spirits; enraged and mad from lack of touch. Ty Kora Tek, an earth goddess, took these spirits under her protection. The Octagony met again to solve the problem, and to create a new breed of Mostali. They sought after numbers – quantity, not quality – this time.

They made the Tenth Container, the Clay Jar. From it clambered the many Clay Mostali. These are quite different from their predecessors, being smaller, less intelligent, and generally inferior in every way save one: they were easier to make. These are the Clay Mostali, also called dwarfs. Some stayed to help in further creation, but most were outfitted with iron and sent to follow Iron God into battle.

Next the Octagony and the Clay God sang songs of power and worked their skills to make the Last Container, the Diamond Goblet. From that came new beings, the Diamond Mostali or the Diamond Dwarfs. They were endowed with diamond skills, which are the sources of Mostali Rune magics for the dwarf race. They are the leaders of the dwarfs.

As the war struggled on and the world rocked upon its foundations, there were losses among the Old Mostali, and many Clay Mostali were taught their skills as replacements, as best as they were able. When Chaos entered the world, the Old Mostali refused to depart their secure Spike any longer, and sent only the Clay Mostali out into the world when technicians were needed. This way, more Clay Mostali were taught the skills of their elder, wiser brethren.

Cracks had long been present in the unchangeable face of Law, and utter confusion had seeped out of the holes made by Boggles. The Celestial Court was held prisoner by their own laws. Gods defeated themselves without understanding why or how. Kargan Tor, god of War, abandoned his post and allowed the army of Chaos to slide in. With a clap of doom, the edifice vanished into nothingness. It took with it the majority of the elder Mostali races. Chaos took the upper hand and the world slid towards oblivion.

The dwarfs inherited the realms of the vanished Mostali. They arranged their lives to follow those of their former leaders, and so set up the Golden caste, Silvern caste, and so on, each with their prescribed tasks to perform. The Diamond dwarfs were the leaders, each caste sending their representatives to the Dectamony, or Council of Ten Minerals, for approval and transmutation into this esteemed status. They revered the Old Law to the best of their ability, and they determined to struggle forever to reassemble the World Machine. The Iron Mostali, the most numerous of the surviving Old Mostali, taught their ways to the eager Clay dwarfs, thus reestablishing the dwarf culture firmly.

With the loss of Mostal, the dwarfs sought divine friendship in the world. They had already established rapport with some deities, through kinship or like purpose. Lodril was one such friend. After he was tamed by Argan Argar, the dwarfs continued friendship with his two children, Caladra and Aurelion. The heat and pressure of these subterranean volcanoes provides energy for the many dwarfish labors. Ty Kora Tek, daughter of Gata, is the dwarf goddess of death, for she lives deep within the earth and has befriended the dwarfs, promising to return their souls' energy to them if they would worship her. Sometimes Iron God is said to be her husband, sometimes Lodril is, and sometimes it is Mostal. All those three have many reasons to be associated with the goddess of death within the earth.

The dwarfs maintained their strongholds throughout the Great Darkness. Some fell to chaos, others fell to other foes, but many survived. They wrought their wonders, sent their prayers and powers to the Machine, and rejoiced when the Sun rose again, proof that their perseverence and piety had paid off. Thus they were inspired to maintain their iron discipline and religion, praying even harder so that the world will be repaired even more. Thus, they do not believe that the Gods War is over yet, for their perfect world is not yet restored.

Mostal was the Maker. He delighted in taking materials and constructing something new from them. He made everything, or else taught others how to make it ...

Dwarf Heresies

Despite the repeated claims of ironclad dwarf solidarity, there are a number of aberrant groups who have broken away from the mainstream dwarf belief. Those which have attained notable popularity have also achieved the status of heresies from the Dectamony at Nida.

Openhandism is the oldest known Mostali heresy. It was popular before the Darkness, and some of the early acts of Iron were to retrieve dwarf secrets from the ill-advised hands which held them. Openhandism is a belief in the willingness to share dwarf knowledge with others. Openhandism sprang into popularity during the Darkness, especially from the Greatway region where dwarfs cooperated with all races to fight chaos.

When the sun rose and Time began, the Greatway dwarfs and their allies in nearby settlements, were placed under probation and sanction by the Dectamony. Iron Diamond Voice became a leader of dwarf dissent among the Greatway dwarfs, and was the first dwarf to sit upon the First Council which went out from Dragon Pass and brought culture to the wastes of Peloria.

In 182, the Dectamony declared the Greatway dwarfs to be severed from all dwarfs of Mostal, and every settlement except those at the Vent, nearby in the Holy Country, agreed. Shortly afterward, a number of Greatway dwarfs supported the Second Council, and at that time (in 212)

the entire nation was declared heretic. Despite this, it is recorded that the majority of dwarfs in Greatway were still solid and true workers in the old Mostal tradition, for the city was healthy and peoductive, and contributed greatly to the Council's efforts.

Dwarfs were foremost among those who explored the wonders which the ruins of Dorastor offered. Their skills were especially well-suited for building a new civilization upon the ruins. Openhandism paid off here, for the region quickly grew and flourished.

Dwarfs supported the Gbaji experiment. Friction had begun between some of the elder races, whose individuals still remembered personal insults from others who were yet alive. Thus, when the trolls walked out on the experiment and created the Broken Council, the dwarfs did not even wait for government sanction, but immediately began to ambush and kill trolls. However, after the trolls were conquered, and most of Peloria bought to silence under Nysalor's golden reign, the uppity elves took to leaning upon the rights of the dwarfs more and more.

A further schism among the heretics broke out when Lord Angarko the Golden Diamond argued with Iron Diamond Voice, and then succeeded him as speaker of the dwarfs at the council. Lord Angarko was murdered by elvish treachery, and only inferior dwarf leaders came forward to help after that, and their support for Nysalor waned. Only those who lived in Dorastor went forth to battle again and again.

The dwarfs of the west were glad to help Arkat against the chaos forces in their area. Some of Arkat's men benefited greatly from dwarf favor. However, they did not send any forces into the open in Ralios. Only a small band of hardy volunteers, all fanatics for the Dectamony, volunteered to go with Arkat to Dragon Pass. They went more for their own purposes than for Arkat, for in Dragon Pass they sought to convert the dwarfs there back to Dectamonic ways. Most locals agreed, and went to Dorastor to fight to prove themselves. Most died, and there was always bitter feelings afterwards among the friends of those that died for this seeming betrayal.

In Nida, the dwarf capital, a further heresy broke out among the conservatives. They saw how the new ideas of the Greatway heretics had brought their downfall, and they decided that the lessen indicated that everyone should return to the oldest ways possible. They sought to enforce Octamonism, a belief in returning to a Rule of the Eight Minerals.

Octamonism enjoyed a flare of popularity across Glorantha during the Second Age. It never gained the lofty status of Heresy, for it passed out of favor among the majority everyplace except in Diamond Mountain, in Teshnos, where iron was rare anyway. Still, believers remain in every dwarf city.

Individualism was the next major problem among dwarfs. It was born sometime during the Second Age, probably about the year 700, by a dwarf later called Chark the liberator. Chark had been alive before the Dawn, and he had always done his part. The shock of Openhandism, and its effects, disturbed him so he sought solace in religion. His piety was so firm that, they say, his bones turned into iron. He probed deeper and deeper into the secrets of Mostal, and he also met young Arkat one day while seeking his god, Mostal, on the Heroplane. The combination of Arkat's knowledge, plus Chark's own seeking, brought him to the secret of his heresy.

Individualism believes that a single dwarf has inherent worth or value in itself outside the community. It goes further, and says, and tries to prove, that each dwarf has, or can have, an individual soul which can retain identity after death, and not turn into just another zap of energy. Chark claims that each little soul is, in fact, made in the image of Mostal. The implications of this struck later, when a number of formerly quite tame dwarfs decided to emulate their ancient Founder and seek their own destiny and creativity.

Individualism soon found believers in most dwarf strongholds. In 850 the Nidan Dectamony declared it to be a full and complete heresy, and that all such blasphemers would be placed under probation, sanction, and isolation. The Greatway dwarfs, still smarting from their former treatment, declared the Nidan Dectamony to be criminally insane, and then sent secret money and power to the Octamonist leaders there.

The Dectamony acted swiftly against their closest enemy, and sent an army secretly overground against the dwarfs of Belskan, near Seshnela. The city fell, with heavy losses, in 852. The survivors were purged of individuals, new leaders were sent from Nida, and the business of rebuilding the population was begun.

During this period there was continued trouble with trolls and elves, and increased trouble with humans. Both the God Learners and the Empire of the Wyrm's Friends used keen investigative techniques to rediscover dwarf secrets, or to draw amazing conclusions from a few facts. Openhandism was unpopular among dwarfs everywhere, and most dwarfs withdrew from human contact and reacted angrily when provoked.

Nothing good occured when the dwarfs attempted to send three armies secretly against the Greatway

alliance. One was caught in the open by trolls, who harassed it into nothing, while another was destroyed in an underground dwarf ambush from Greatway. A resurgence of confidence and Openhandism among the Greatway leaders resulted in renewed contact with humans of the area. Thus the dwarfs were not destroyed, because humans from the Third Council surprised the Nidan Dectamony's last army, so that the battle was quickly decided in Greatway's favor.

Friendship there was destroyed by the Dragonkill War of 1100. The gradual infiltration of dwarfs into the area again did not make many opportunities for friendship between species. However, the long-lived dwarfs there have not forgotten their former policies, and have remained open to friendly humans. Thus, the area around Dragon Pass is notable among dwarf kind, for it became a hotbed of heresy.

In 1247 a new moon rose into the sky of Glorantha, the Red Moon. This was cause for great rejoicing among dwarfs, for this was another great sign believed to prophesy that their ancient World Machine was, according to plan, being repaired. The prophecies hinted that it would be necessary to bring about strict dwarf unity to complete the Great Machine.

Isidilian the Wise, currently the best-known dwarf from the Dragon Pass region, seized this chance, and through some smooth talking convinced the leaders at Nida that the Greatway heresy must not be so bad if it did not cancel out the ancient prophecies of unity. With reluctance the Dectamony agreed that it might, in fact, be so. They agreed to reverse some of their previous sanctions if the Greatway dwarfs would promise not to spread their beliefs outside their own areas, and would agree to send some men and arms to aid Nida in a fight they were having at the time.

Thus the unity of dwarfdom was again secured. Dwarfs now remain mostly at rest, sending individuals and messengers forth, but remaining aloof from greater business. They wait in confidence, knowing that their great machine is slowly coming together, despite Time.

Dwarf Lore

All the intelligent creatures of Glorantha have secret powers unavailable to other beings of their world. These species-oriented powers are especially prominent among the Elder Races, who view each other's abilities as diabolic and utterly mysterious. For example, trolls have a sonar sense whose origins and properties are unknown to the other races. Thus trolls are able to perform certain feats which are quite beyond the understanding and power of elves, dwarfs, or humans. No normal person of any other species would try to acquire these alien powers. What sane elf would ever want to be troll-like?

The dwarfs are no exception. They, the Makers, have tools beyond the understanding of other races. This is called dwarf magic. It is mysterious and diabolic in nature, intended to harm the world and make dwarfs dominant. Trolls, elves, dragonewts, and the lesser Elder Races know of these strange, secret magics, and what they can do. They have deep respect and fear of them, and they know clearly that they must ever avoid their taint.

Humans, always inquisitive and never as restricted as the Elder Races, have often plundered the secrets of the Mostali and stolen many of their abilities. They have learned little of true dwarf knowledge, while ransacking the garbage can of the great dwarf Machine, but it was noticeable, and the dwarfs are now wise to the deception, and avoid all humans if they can.

Many dwarf items of great magical power are quite familiar to us, the referees and players of *RuneQuest*. It is easy for us to say, "He pulls out a couble-barrelled flintlock and levels it at your character." This will certainly instill immediate respect among the characters, even if they have no idea what damage a *RuneQuest* gun will do. But is that instant recognition what the role-playing situation calls for?

When I play *RuneQuest*, one of the enjoyable parts of the experience is to role-play these inquisitive (or simply stupid) adventurers through a world which is quite new to them. I, the player, usually know much more than that wary PC stalking down that nicely swept cement road in the wilderness. He, poor old Tostig, has seen wide clean roads before and is busy spouting off his great knowledge of how this is just like the great Seshnegi roads which he saw in the far west. "There is no need for extra caution." he says confidently, "These are all long since abandoned." Fortunately for the party, no one believes Tostig (as usual) and they detect the party of dwarfs hiding beside the road, up ahead.

"Impossible." proclaims Tostig. "There have been no dwarfs in this land for centuries. Their reign was too terrible, and humans, elves, and trolls united to destroy every vestige of their evil civilization." Despite his confidence, Tostig finds it useful to dismount and join his companions in a defensive position. There is no need for me to relate the abuse which the other player-characters heap upon

Tostig's hard-earned knowledge. But Tostig is one to quickly reaffirm his current certainty through immediate experience.

Declaims Tostig, "Well, when they were here last they were all terrible. Every one of them was in iron and never missed his target. They can sling tiny thunderstones over a half-mile in distance. Half of them are only engines, full of tiny pieces which mimic a man's innards and can take no injury or wound. They all have extra spirits. Magic potions are always being used by Mostali, and they can mix up to six in one drinking. Even though wearing iron, they make no noise, can sometimes sense your thoughts, and are known to eat flesh of any type."

All this is fact, Tostig assures everyone, for he is well-read and widely traveled. This is all quite important for our defense, after all. "We should probably attack first. They never tell the truth. Don't trust a Mostali peace signal. Sometimes their sign language is completely opposite ours. It happened that way to King Amaling in Seshnela ..."

So what about this babble? Some of it is true, some is not. Most of it is half-true. Which is which? I know, for at the moment I am probably the world's autority on Mostali. Should I tell my fellow players about it now?

"They probably have metal gargoyles flying overhead. They often use stone gnomes to burrow tunnels under their foes, so search underground with your spirits. Giant moles and shrews are their slaves, big enough to take a horse. Dwarfs never take prisoners and scorn ransom. Dwarfs hate all humans because people kidnapped Quicksilver, their god, long ago."

To role-play Tostig, I must not reveal what is truth and what is falsehood. Tostig's knowledge is what is being played, and to do otherwise would betray the spirit of the game. Whatever the outcome of the current encounter, the other characters will have gained a certain amount of knowledge as well. When it is time for them to meet dwarfs again, later, they can draw upon their previous game experience and act accordingly.

"That is one of their Great Exploders! I am aiming for his head." However, Jorgard the leader has already cast Glue on Tostig's crossbow, and he stands and makes the Issaries signal for peaceful greeting. The dwarf responds, and a peaceful encounter continues.

With his share of the treasure traded for, Tostig, ever the bookworm, secures an ancient manuscript on Mostali and begins educating himself once more. Next time, he says, he won't be fooled.

So, when the dwarf lifts his hand with some machinery in it, you should describe the tool in Gloranthan terms. It is unlikely that many have ever seen any intact Mostali equipment, and many manuscripts and stories have distorted and twisted drawings, descriptions, or facts. Don't tell the players what it is, even if they ask. Say something like, "It is about as big as a watermelon, made out of metal, and has three moving parts. If you make a Spot Hidden roll, you see a small glowing light on one side and a silver chain hanging from it. What is your statement of intent?"

Thus will dwarf magic show itself: a thing of mystery and uncertainty.

Dwarf Magic

The dwarf god, Mostal, is a tool user. The exact implements of his divine usage are beyond mortal ken. Yet the Rune spells he gives are shaped in his images, and so dwarf Rune magic is primarily concerned with tools to aid in construction. The exact tools depend upon the thing being made but are based on several common types.

Heat is one such Rune spell category. It is used by most of the Mostal subcults. For instance, the stonemasons make their wedges swell and split rock. A glassmaker turns sand into glass, and the goldsmith heats his metal to malleability. The temperatures for these tasks are exactly as needed for an appropriate volume of material, and vary with the subcult.

Melt is a more powerful, but related Rune spell. It will turn any solid object except adamant or truestone into liquid, as long as it is within a special container. This spell is exactly the same for all the dwarf subcults.

Weigh is another class-variable spell, calibrated to the special needs of the subcult. Stonemasons weigh kilotons, silversmiths grams, and alchemists liters.

Measure is a variable spell dependent upon subcult. Stonemasons reach around a rock and their fingers extend to encompass a huge block. Brassworkers can use their enspelled digits to measure gears to fit screws, calibrate spring tension, and work pulleys. Ironsmiths can fit armor to a man like fine clothing.

Hand Tool is yet another variable one. The limbs are changed in form and consistency to do the finest work needed. Wedges and hammers grow on the limbs of masons. Gold- and silversmiths gain fine tweezers and snippers on fingertips, while glassblowers have hollow tubes on their digits, which they can turn and move with magical facility.

In addition to these, there are other spells to make special things, though many of these have been lost. Creat Jolanti or Create Nilmerg are some examples of such spells.

Diamond Dwarfs, the priestly class, attain their positions only after the most strenuous maintenance of the Mostali code. Requirements are tougher than in most cults, and are the equivalent of passing Rune lord status, plus additional requirements. However, once acquired, the status allows the priest to learn most any normal spell.

The Iron God's priests have more opportunity to rise to priesthood, for their leaders are most likely to fall in battle, and, despite the best efforts, fail to be resurrected. However, their requirements are just as strict, and herder to learn properly and survive, as their arts are so dangerous.

Ironsmith spells are similar to those of the other subcults, and do not relate to the war-making craft of the cult. Thus, their Heat spell melts iron, their Weigh spell measures weapons and armor parts, and their Hand Tools are hammers and tongs. These spells are useful for combat at times, and are so utilized, but were not intended for that purpose. □

All the intelligent creatures of Glorantha have secret powers unavailable to other beings in their world.

SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE

Dwarf Weapons

FOR RUNEQUEST

by Steve Perrin

Almost every fantasy world is populated by dwarfs. All dwarfs are makers and builders, and this is reflected in their favorite weapons, especially for the Mostali of Glorantha.

Dwarfs are usually pictured with axes and hammers because axes and hammers are primarily tools, useful for many different jobs, and dwarfs have more than once been called on to stop working and start fighting. Thus, their weapon expertise with tool-like weapons has grown out of proportion to their use of other weapons.

The dwarfs of Glorantha make everything they use. For centuries, dwarfs living beneath the surface felt little need for missile weapons within their burrows. However, their unceasing conflicts with the other Elder Races showed them the terrifying power of the elf bow and troll slingstone. So, with typical dwarven craftmanship they set out to make a useful missile weapon.

Illustration by David Dudley

The result was the crossbow. It is the ideal dwarf missile weapon, having a flat trajectory rather than the arcing fire of bows and slings. It is perfect for corridors and defending dwarfen cave complexes, as many invading elves and trolls have discovered.

Development of Firearms

The dwarf crossbow was quickly copied by men, though nobody copied the repeating mechanism which makes the dwarf light crossbow so devastating in combat. Perhaps this was because humans also used normal bows, which did nearly as much damage as light crossbows, and were much cheaper and faster firing. Still, dwarf craftsmen looked for a new mechanism which would have the flat trajectory of the crossbow, but would be safe from human copying. Eventually, the alchemists of Mostal invented gunpowder.

None but dwarfs know when the discovery was made. All that is known has been taken from the accounts of elf and troll survivors of raiding parties suddenly confronted with devastating explosions and deadly rains of rock and iron. The dwarfs keep this costly invention a dire secret, and only rarely allow it out of their tunnels.

At first, the Mostali did not let gunpowder out of their halls at all, but eventually the Gods War drew the guns to the surface. Only the warped nilmergs, known as gremlins, and gunpowder gobblers have kept the humans from copying them.

Early dwarf muskets paralleled Earth-style models. First they used matchlocks, then the wheellock, then hit upon flintlocks. They have stuck with that sort of mechanism through the centuries. The flintlock allows them to get off one shot every three melee rounds.

One of the problems with dwarf firearms is the great clouds of smoke that accompany every firing. However, the dwarfs have learned to use that as an advantage, making their powder smokier to act as a shield during reloading. In their own complexes they often use large mechanical fans to blow the smoke toward their attackers, so they can use the cover to advance to close quarters with their axes. This trick is best against

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humans and elves – troll darksense is not fooled by mere smoke.

Dwarven Tricks and Traps

Even before the invention of gunpowder, dwarfs were hard nuts to crack in their underground fortresses. Invaders were continually surprised by falling floors, spikes shooting from the floor, and sudden jets of burning oil or steam. Certain dwarf caves in volcanic regions used steam-powered cannon and lava rivers to let their enemies know they were in hot water.

Once gunpowder was invented, the dwarfs devised rolling grenades (adapted from the common sort of ninepins) which were placed in special corridors containing curving turns, and even carved grooves. Dwarf grenadiers have taken to collecting trophies (usually pieces of armor their enemies have no more use for) as indicators of their bowling skill.

DWARF WEAPON STATISTICS

Weapon	*Type*	*STR*	*DEX*	*Damage*	*HP*	*Enc*	*Range*	*Rate*	*Basic*	*Notes*
Blunderbuss	musket	14	8	4D6	10	3	10m	1/5MR	20%	
Bowling Grenade	'thrown'	12	14	5D6	–	2	–	1/MR	05%	
Concussion Grenade	thrown	–	–	6D6	–	(2)	20m	1/MR	05%	
Fragmentation Grenade	thrown	–	–	5D6	–	(2)	20m	1/MR	05%	
Musket	musket	11	10	2D10	12	3	40m	1/3MR	05%	Impales
Pistol	1-handed	11	12	2D6+2	10	2	10m	1/2MR	05%	Impales
Rifle	musket	11	10	2D8	12	3	60m	1/5MR	05%	Impales

Blunderbuss – This is a short-barreled smoothbore with a flaring muzzle, and is used as a corridor cleaner. It is especially useful to a lone dwarf in a corridor with no massed ranks of musketeers to back him up. If it is fired at a group within its basic range, it can strike up to 1D6 of them for the damage given above (they must be clustered together, of course). At 10 to 20 meters, a successful hit will strike 2D6 people for 2D6 points of damage each. At over 20m a successful attack only has half chances for success, and can hit up to 1D6 people, doing 1D6 points of damage to each. There is no effect on any targets over 40m away.

Bowling Grenade – These bowling balls are used strictly in defense of the dwarf caverns. They can travel 40m a melee round and are set off if some one uses an Ignite spell on them, or when their fuse goes off, or both. They are like fragmentation grenades; having the same effects varying with distance from the explosion.

Concussion Grenade – These grenades are carried only by Rune lords and priests, and the bearer will often use the spell of Delayed Ignite (or a matrix for the spell), which will set the grenade off 5 strike ranks or more after it is thrown. Fuses are also used for these bombs. They contain a large amount of powder in a light casing, and most of the damage is done by the explosion. Unless a target is standing within a meter of where the bomb goes off, he will take little physical damage, but may well be stunned and knocked down. These side effects of the explosion can be deadly in a battle.

Concussion Grenade Effects

Radius	*Damage*
0-1 m	6D6
1-6 m	1D6

Locale of Explosion:

Outside – all within radius roll DEX x 5 or fall down.

Inside – as outside, plus all within radius must make CON x 5 or go unconscious for 25-CON melee rounds.

Fragmentation Grenade – These are like concussion grenades, but have less gunpowder and more casing. The casing is normally cast bronze, so that it will break up into many fragments. The bomb is not as deadly at close range as the concussion variety, but it has a larger circle of destruction. These, again, are only carried by Rune level dwarfs, and are used with fuses or Delayed Ignite spells to activate them.

Fragmentation Grenade Effects

Radius	*Damage*
0-1 m	5D6
1-2 m	4D6
2-3 m	3D6
3-4 m	2D6
4-6 m	2D6
6-8 m	1D6

Pistol – This is a one-handed smoothbore weapon of the same calibre as a musket. They are only carried by the entourages of priests or lords. They are the most common gunpowder weapons allowed outside the caverns.

Musket – a smoothbore, two-handed firearm. This is the standard gunpowder weapon for home cavern defense. They are rarely allowed outside of dwarf settlements. The dwarfs use these in massed volleys down long corridors.

Rifle – A recent innovation in dwarf arms is the rifled barrel for muskets. This makes for a more accurate weapon, but it takes longer to load and fires a smaller ball. The dwarfs have few of these, as their tactical doctrine has no place for them, but a few scouts and lone doorguardsmen, who have prospects for long-range targets, posess these weapons.

New Battle Magic Spell Description

DELAYED IGNITE: *variable spell, Range touch, passive, unfocussed, semitemporal.*

This spell causes a flammable substance to ignite 5 strike ranks after it is cast for every point in the spell. If the user wished to start a fire under his forge, he could build up a pile of charcoal and tinder and apply Delayed Ignite 3 to the pile, giving himself 15 strike ranks to get away from the blaze before the spell goes off.

This spell is known only to the Mostal and Third Eye Blue cults.□

SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE

Dwarf Senses

BY SANDY PETERSEN

Among the common races of Glorantha, only trolls and dwarfs are easily capable of getting around in the dark. Elves and humans both call this ability of their ofttimes-enemies' "Darksense."

This is an oversimplification. The darksense of trolls and that of dwarfs is different in almost every detail. The troll darksense is based on sonar, like that of a bat or whale, and is described extensively in *Trollpak*.

Since dwarfs do not use sonar, how do they 'see' in the dark? Dwarfs are creatures of Earth, in a peculiarly grim and stern form. The sense most natural to, and innate in, the Earthly element is that of touch. It seems reasonable that the dwarfish darksense is somehow connected with the sense of touch, just as the troll darksense is connected with the sense of hearing. (Trolls are creatures of the night, and hearing is the sense most associated with Darkness.)

Is there such a sense as a long-distance touch – one suitable for getting around in the dark? Even fighting in the dark? Yes, surprisingly.

All fish have a sensory organ known as the Lateral Line. This structure consists of rows of membranous sensory pits, which run down the animal's sides and are also located on the head. (Those pockmarks sometimes visible on a shark's face are actually components of this sensory organ, not symptoms of disease.) The function of the lateral line is to sense water pressure and currents. An average fish is sensitive enough to these currents to evade enemies and remain schooled with others of its kind, even when blinded.

It is hard for us to imagine what such a sense is like, but we can try. Picture yourself in a swimming pool, floating calmly underwater with your eyes closed. As people swim past you, waves of current brush past your body, telling you that someone has moved near to you. You can imagine that if you were sensitive enough, you could not only tell when someone nearby had moved, but you could sense someone far off, and tell the velocity and approximate size of any moving object within a certain radius from your body. This is exactly what a fish is capable of doing. A shark can feel an injured fish thrash (or a swimmer splash) from fifty yards away, in the murkiest water, just from the waves of pressure emanating from the creature.

Pressure is not the only component of the sense of touch. 'Touch' is actually composed of five different senses that we normally lump together into a single category. A second sense useful at a distance is that of heat-sense. All of us are familiar with the waves of heat proceeding from a stove or fire.

The ability to sense heat delicately and efficiently has also been exploited by an earthly animal – the snake. Both pit vipers and boas (including the famous boa constrictor) are able to sense heat radiation at a distance with extreme precision. Pit vipers have a pair of pits (hence the name) between their eyes and nostrils. Boas have a whole row of smaller pits along their lower jaws. A rattler, hunting its prey in the forest or desert night, can sense a difference in temperature as small as a half of a degree or less. To say the least, this makes it hard for a warm-blooded animal to hide from the snake in any sort of camouflage, since his body heat will lead the rattler unerringly to him no matter what he does.

Now we have a possibility for the dwarfish darksense; a combination of highly-developed pressure- and heat-sensing abilities. Dwarfs don't seem to obviously possess sensory pits or lateral lines, but this is a minor cavil. Maybe such pits are hidden underneath their beards. Maybe their skin itself is capable of doing such sensing. Maybe their pits and lateral line-equivalents are under the skin where we cannot see them. A distinct possibility as far as heat-sensing is concerned is that the dwarfs' eyes are sensitive to heat, and serve as an equivalent to the rattlesnake's paired pits. The dwarf could not sense heat as a visual image, of course (so-called infravision is an impossibility), but he could both take in light with his eyes, and sense heat with their exteriors at the same time. Of course, such dual-purpose eyes would not be quite as good for normal sight, but dwarfs have never been claimed to be especially keen in vision.

A dwarf can use this battery of senses to detect the presence and direction of a living thing via its heat. All living things (even cold-blooded ones) give off more heat than their surroundings, and warm-blooded ones give off vast amounts through their respiration. By feeling air currents as their enemies move, a dwarf can tell the velocity of a weapon swinging at him, and parry or dodge it. He can tell where his foe is and what their positions are, both friend and foe. A dwarf can parry and attack in the dark. If a foe quietly closes a door far down a hall from a band of guard dwarfs, the dwarfs will feel the difference in pressure, and immediately know something is wrong. If a door is opened, they will feel that, too.

These senses are perfectly designed for underground living. Underground, the temperature remains constant and the air is calm and still all the time. Any heat source or moving object will stand out like a beacon, and call attention to itself against this background. A foe will broadcast his presence by every warm breath of air he takes, and by every motion he makes.

A person could try to make himself hidden from even dwarfish darksense by remaining absolutely immobile, so as to keep from generating air currents. Remember that the dwarfs can even feel your character's breathing! So hold your breath when the dwarf guard passes by, don't make a move, and pray to whatever gods there be that he doesn't pick up your body heat. If you are downwind of the dwarf, then your body heat will take much longer to reach the dwarf, though he will still be able to sense pressure differences.

This power and great ability becomes much less impressive out-of-doors. There, the dwarfs are at a disadvantage. Amid the continually changing currents and breezes of air, the dwarf's pressure sense is only good at very close range (varying with the irregularity of the wind, but usually only twenty feet or less). The varied background of temperature in the hostile outer world helps to confuse a dwarf's heat sense, except at very close range (three feet or so).

Experienced dwarfs, wise in the ways of the surface world, are less dissociated by the confusion of the upper earth, but they are still much worse off than when they are in their static tunnels. Basically, the dwarf's senses are shorter-ranged than those of the troll, though they are more flexible. In the cloistered caverns and underground cities where dwarfs live and work, this shortened range makes little difference. In the outside world, a troll sees better in the dark, and can see further than a dwarf. In an underground cave or structure, dwarfs and trolls are approximately equal, though their senses are useful for different things. Even in the most chaotic, stormy night, a dwarf will sense things better than a human. In daylight, the human will sense much better than a dwarf, and at longer range than the notoriously nearsighted dwarf – of course, in the caves, there is no need for distance vision.

A dwarf's darksense is good for things besides moving about, sensing intruders, and fighting in the dark. A dwarf smith can tell with his heat sense just how hot a bar of iron is that he is forging, and when it has cooled to the point that he must quench it. He can tell how hot a fire is, and whether he should stoke it up more. A dwarf medic can tell precisely how much of a fever an individual has, and how heavily he is breathing. A dwarf standing almost anywhere in a cavern complex can tell when a door is opened somewhere, or any other change in air pressure takes place. An obvious corollary to this is that a dwarf can always tell what altitude or depth he is at (within a range of a half-kilometer or so) simply by feeling the air pressure.

In the dark, on the surface, dwarfs must usually close to be able to fight effectively. Their vaunted missile weapons of repeating crossbows and firearms are not as valuable simply because the dwarfs can't sense their foes that far away. Even in their caverns, the dwarfs can't be too far from their enemies – certainly no more than 50 meters or so for precise aiming and firing. On the surface during a normally breezy time, they would be able to accurately aim and fire at targets no further away than 10 meters or so. If there is light available, they can, of course, sight normally. In their caverns, the dwarfs can sense intruders from distances by their movement, and prepare ambushes for them, waiting stolidly for their signal to attack. Dwarfs are natural experts at remaining rock-still when needed.

Summing up, just like the stereotype, dwarfs are good in the dark (though not quite as good as trolls in the open), great in their caverns, and incapable of truly long-distance combat actions.

A properly-played dwarf assault is performed by having the dwarfs close to 10-20 meters, fire their crossbows and flintlocks to disorganize and slay their foes, then charge their enemy in a compact mass and hit them while they are still disrupted from the firing. This is the proven dwarf method of warfare, and has served them well against humans, trolls, elves, and other, more alien races. Dwarfs, with their ingrained

Illustration by Luise Perenne

conservatism, are unlikely to experiment or use untried tactics in war, and who can blame them? Their ancient techniques are still good and almost foolproof. The dwarf senses serve them well in battle, at work, and in leisure. They are ideally suited for dwarfish preferences and habits. The Gloranthan dwarf is truly a well-rounded individual by his own lights, and can bless his Maker for the senses he possesses, which complement his desires and abilities so well. □

SPECIAL MOSTAL ISSUE

METAL MARVELS: dwarfs

by John T. Sapienza, Jr.

Citadel Miniatures U.S.A., P.O.Box 12352, Cincinnati, OH 45212, is the U.S. branch of the British company whose Fantasy Adventurers line was reviewed in *Different Worlds 9* and includes one dwarf not reviewed here. Citadel has been vigorously expanding their lines of figures in what they call the fantasy tribes, which are lines of figures of specific races. These now include orcs, goblins, trolls, and skeletons, each of which run over a dozen different figures. The dwarf line reviewed here, however, includes an interesting innovation: personalized figures. The first ten figures in the line are made with 15-20 head variations, so it is possible to not only choose a figure by its equipment but also by the person it represents. This useful feature will be extended to other lines of humans and elves. (My only complaint with it is that Citadel so far has done this with only male figures – come on, guys, give the ladies equal time.) The fantasy tribe dwarfs are sold individually, cost $1.10 each, and were sculpted by Alan and Michael Perry.

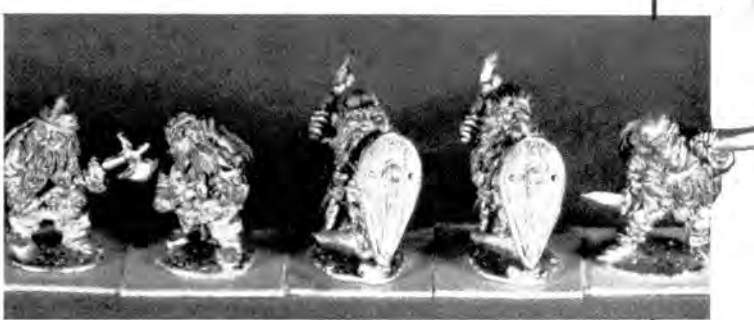
The personalities in the line run from full helm to bare, bald pate. The first four photos show some duplication of heads in order to show different models in the line (The bald-headed dwarf happened to get in four times – he must have influence). The heads pictured are: full helm with long hair and beard flowing out the bottom, closed helm consisting of a circular helm with faceplate, long-horned viking helm, short-horned viking helm, round helm with knobs instead of horns, round helm with top knob and noseguard, round helm with ridge, round helm with flaps, and plain round helm. Then we have hats: one with brim turned up in back, one like a French Revolution hat, one like a leather pilot's cap, and a hood with cape. Then there are dwarfs with no hat or helm; one with a full flowing head of hair, and the other with beard but with a bald top. Two other variants are worth noting. Sometimes the dwarf is shown with a pipe in his mouth, but this varies not only with personality, but with model. And some personality poses actually vary the posture of the model from what is found in most poses for that model (compare the two shown in the photo holding the 2H battleaxe).

All the dwarfs in the line wear chainmail covered by a tunic, unless specified otherwise. The sculptors emphasized clothing over armor, and the mail doesn't show much. All the figures stand about 20mm from head to foot, allowing for posture and headgear. All the dwarfs carry their weapons in their right hands. If they carry a shield, it is always in their left.

FTD1, 2, 4

FTD1 carries a spear horizontally at the ready, his shield is a rounded kite shape. He wears a scabbarded sword over his back. FTD2 carries a crossbow at port arms, rather than ready to shoot, with a supply of quarrels in a pouch at his waist. He wears a scabbarded shortsword at his belt, and a studded kite shield is slung over his back.

FTD3 holds a 2H battleaxe at port arms, and has a round shield slung over his back and a scabbarded sword at his belt.



FTD 3, 5, 10

FTD4 holds his studded maul in both hands over his right shoulder, ready to strike. His round shield is fastened to his left arm for protection, and he has a 1H axe attached to his belt.

FTD5 stands holding his kite shield forward and his 1H axe raised to strike. His crossbow and pouch of quarrels are on his back. FTD6 has a studded kite shield at his left and his 1H axe

FTD 6, 7

blade touching the bround, a pose of alert rest. A throwing hammer is thrust through his belt at his back.

FTD7 holds his hammer ready to strike, and holds an oval shield for protection. He has a 1H pick through his belt at the back. FTD8 holds a standard on a pole, a carved dragon. A round shield is slung over his back, and he holds a 1H axe over his left shoulder. This isn't a typical setup for gaming, but you easily could clip off the dragon and replace it with a spearpoint. The dragon itself could be used to represent a small dragon familiar or

FTD 8, 9

a Pernese fire lizard, for which it is one of the few figures available in the right size.

FTD9 is the only model in the line in plate armor. He holds a sword raised to strike, and an oval shield for protection. FTD10 is sounding a horn with his left hand, while holding a shortsword or dagger in his right. A studded kite shield is slung over his back. A hornblower has little practical use in much gaming, but the figure could be converted to holding a second sword in the left hand with some work.

The balance of the Citadel dwarfs come in "only" one version apiece. FTD11 through 13 were not conceived in the same tradition as FTD1 to 10, and probably would fit more logically in Citadel's Weird Fantasy line than here. FTD11 is a fat dwarf mother dressed in peasant garb, and FTD12 is a pair of youngsters, one male and one female. They could be used together as an odd encounter, I suppose. FTD13 is the Dwarf With No Name, and is a parody of the hero of the infamous movie westerns of that series.

FTD 11, 12, 13, FA 29, FA 15

You need a campaign in which guns are allowed to use this one. It might be useful with *RuneQuest*, as some Gloranthan dwarfs seem to have firearms.

The last two figures are from the Fantasy Adventurers line. FA15, Dwarf with Two-Handed Hammer, is a replacement for the figure reviewed in *DW9*. Citadel is in the process of redoing most of their original figures with new ones they feel represent higher quality. That's a commendable goal, but I wish they would simply abandon old numbers and use new numbers for new figures, to avoid confusion to gamers ordering by mail. FA15 wears chainmail and a pointed helmet. He horizontally holds a hammer almost as long as he is tall as he strides forward. He wears a backpack, a small round shield, and a pouch and canteen on his back. FA29, Dwarf Champion, is new. A vigorous figure, he stands with 2H battleaxe almost wrapped around his shoulders, ready for a horizontal swing. He wears chainmail mostly hidden by his tunic and hood. His beard is tucked into his belt, from which a dagger and a pouch hang. His pack and two more pouches or flasks are slung over his back.

Grenadier Models, Inc., P.O.Box 305, Springfield, PA 19064, offers a box of dwarfs for $7, model 2003 containing ten figures. They average about 20mm from head to foot, and wear chainmail largely hidden by their tunics and floppy hats, unless stated otherwise below.

The *dwarf with short sword* also has a dagger at his belt, and holds a large round shield. He wears an open helm. The *dwarf swordsman* holds a greatsword over his right shoulder, ready to swing. He has a large horn or flask slung over his back. The *dwarf archer* stands ready to shoot his recurved bow (or has just shot an arrow; there is no arrow molded into place). He has a quiver of arrows over his back, and a pouch and dagger at his belt. The *heavy spearman* stands protected by his round shield, ready to throw a very thick spear (it's about 2mm thick). He wears a metal helm and a cape. The *armored spearman* stands with a somewhat smaller round shield, and holds his 1H spear ready to thrust. He wears a closed metal helm ornamented with winged unicorns, a sword at his belt, and a pack over his back.

Grenadier Pack 2003; 1-5

The *dwarf with hammer* is that rare person, a lefty. He holds his hammer in his left hand, and a small round shield in his right. The *axeman* holds a 2H battleaxe at the ready. He has a dagger at his belt and a large pouch. The *dwarf leader* could also serve as a mage (not in *AD&D*, of course). He is a bald-headed fellow with a large pot belly. His beard is so long it goes down his left side, around the back, and over his right hand (barber's union, take note). He has a pipe in his mouth, and holds a staff in his left hand. He wears no armor and no hat. The *heavy crossbow team* is really a double figure, two dwarfs working together with an arbalest, which you must glue the crosspiece onto. The operator is the rear dwarf, who rests the well-sculpted arbalest onto the right shoulder of his companion to steady it for aiming. The front dwarf stands with shield up for protection, and holds a hand axe in his

6-10

left hand. A really interesting and unusual piece, if not especially useful. The *dwarf cleric* holds a mace in his left hand (making him the third lefty in the pack!). His right hand is raised either in blessing or casting a spell. He wears no apparent armor, but has clerical robes and hat, and a cross around his neck. The symbol seems a bit odd on an official *AD&D* figure, as the game has a set of gods for dwarfs already. Perhaps this fellow is a converted Christian, or the symbol has more univeral use. Who knows?

Grenadier does an attractive job of sculptural detail on their figures. This includes ornamentation of all sorts on clothing and weapons. It also includes the fit and detailing of clothing. But I wish they would give their dwarf warriors heavier armor than chainmail.

Heritage USA, 14001 Distribution Way, Dallas, TX 75234, offers several packs of dwarfs for $4.50 a pack. The two packs reviewed from the *Dungeon Dwellers* line average about 22mm from head to foot, and come four to the pack (1213 and 1297). The other two packs are from the *Knights and Magic* line, and average about 20mm from head to foot, and come six to the pack. The reason is that the 2mm difference makes for a substantial difference in figure size and weight, and Heritage can afford to provide extra figures in the smaller size. All these figures were sculpted by Max Carr.

Pack 1213 contains one of the rare female dwarf figures – the breasts and smooth chin being the evidence. Her face is one only a mother could love, but you can't have everything. She wears no armor and no helmet (come on, Max, give me a break), but she does have a shield over her back. She carries a crossbow in her left hand and a lantern in her right. The tip of a sword's scabbard is visible under the shield. The other three figures are bearded males. One wears a hood and cape, and carries a heavy 1H axe in his right hand and a round wooden shield in his left. He wears chainmail. The second wears plate armor and helmet, and carries a 2H battleaxe in both hands in a way that suggests he is left-handed. Sword,

Heritage Pack 1213

dagger, and back-slung shield complete his equipment. The third wears chainmail and a winged helmet. He holds s spear upright in his right hand and a shield in his left. A sword is slung over his back, and a mace is hung at his belt. (The compleat adventurer.)

Pack 1297 has an unarmored and uncapped figure who may be useful as a thief, as he stands with a pouch in his left hand and an axe in his right. A dagger and beltpack complete his goods. Another bareheaded figure stands with crossbow over his right shoulder with right hand and an axe in his left hand. He wears chainmail,

1297

however, and a cape. The dwarf with hammer and shield appears to wear no armor; at least, you can't see any at the edges of his tunic. He does wear a metal helm and backpouch, and is attractively done. The last figure wears chainmail and a horned helmet. He holds a round shield in his left hand and a morningstar in his right, an unusual weapon to find on a figure.

Pack 1466, *Dwarven Heros*, is from the *Knights and Magic* line. It also seems to be a transition from the larger to the smaller size figures, as it contains one of the 22mm size and five of the 20mm size. The large figure holds a greatsword over his head as he charges with a shout. He wears plate (half-plate, anyway) and is a very vigorous figure. The next figure wears full plate and helm,

1466

and carries a round shield in his left hand and holds an ornamented mace in his right. A scabbarded sword at his waist prevents this from being useful as a *D&D* cleric figure as is. The balance of the pack is two each of dwarfs in chainmail with round shields, and 1H axes. One is in a closed horned helmet, and holds the axe overhead. The other is in an ornamented open helm, and holds his axe ready at his waist.

Pack 1467, *Dwarven Crossbows*, is from the same line and size. It contains two each of three types. One is in chainmail, but no helm, and stands with crossbow at rest in his right hand. The other two are unarmored. One stands with crossbow in his right hand, the bow resting on the ground. The other is shooting his crossbow,

1467

which comes separately and must be glued on. Both have scabbarded swords; if the first has one, it is hidden under his cape. These figures are nicely done in their own way, but I question the utility of so many unarmored figures.

Masterpiece Miniatures, 1625 Foothill Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84108, offers a pack of dwarf figures, number 508. The five dwarfs are a fighter, a cleric, a mage, and a male and female thief. The latter makes this of particular interest because female dwarf figures are quite rare. The figure is attractively sculpted in tunic, cape, and boots. But, she stands 25mm from head to foot, which is much too large for a dwarf even in 28mm scale. I recommend her for use as a human thief. The male thief stands about 20mm

Masterpiece Pack 508

from head to foot, which is proper scale, and is in a vigorous pose striding forward with cape flowing behind him. The mage is also 20mm head to foot, ignoring his pointed and decorated hat. This figure may startle *D&D* players, who are used to dwarfs having no mages, but will be useful in games such as *Worlds of Wonder* where there are no such proscriptions.

Both fighter and cleric figures stand 22mm from head to foot, which is a bit tall for a dwarf and a bit short for human, which means that they can pass for either in a pinch, especially if you need some short human characters. This is in itself a criticism of the figures, if you share my view that dwarfs should be chunkier as well as shorter than humans. Of course, this is only a matter of personal taste. The cleric wears robes but no armor. He is bareheaded but has a long beard. If your clerics wear armor and carry weapons, this figure will not fit very well, but you might consider using him as a martial artist figure instead, fighting barehanded. The fighter wears plate armor and a horned helmet.

Included with the pack are accessories to be glued to the figures of your choice: a round shield, a sword, a dagger, an axe, and a jewelled cross. The figures are attractively sculpted and will do nicely, though they have been made with less skill and attention to detail than the very best in the field. The castings in my review sample contained quite a lot of flash to be removed, but this is a common problem with lead figures, and should not deter any gamer with a sharp hobby knife.

Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc., 5938 Carthage Court, Cincinnati, OH 45212, offers dwarfs either individually (packs of six identical

figures for $4.00) of in combination packs. They average 18mm from head to foot, and wear chainmail and helmets unless specified otherwise below. These dwarfs are by Tom Meier.

Pack 02-106, *Dwarf War Party*, contains four figures for $4.00. The *dwarf with spear* is stabbing at shoulder level with his left hand while protecting with his round shield in his right (yet another lefty!). A scabbarded sword is slung over his back. The *dwarf with 2H axe* (02-034) has a curiously-shaped greatsword with a sort of arrowheadshaped tip. I've never seen such a weapon in real life, but if you don't like it, you can always file the point

02-106

down. He has a scabbarded sword at his waist and a round shield slung over his back. The *dwarf with 2H axe* (02-035) holds his battle axe up over his left shoulder. He has less armor and no alternative weapons, in contrast with 02-033. I like the axe, but find the bent-over-backwards pose awkward.

Pack 02-107, *Dwarf War Band*, contains four figures for $4.00. The *dwarf with hammer* (02-036) has his hammer raised in right hand ready to strike, while he holds his round shield in his left. He

02-107

wears a horned helmet, and has a sword slung over his back. The *dwarf with mattock* (02-037) has that mining tool-turned-weapon held in both hands directly over his head and a grim look on his face. He has sword and shield slung over his back. The *dwarf with crossbow* (02-038) has just fired a quarrel (the string is now at rest, straight across). He wears a quarrel box at his waist, and axe and shield across his back. The *dwarf leader* (from 02-039) stands with both hands resting on the hilt of his sword, which stands with point on the ground in front of him. He wears a helmet with large horns and is elaborately dressed, but does not appear to have any visible armor. I assume there is chainmail under the tunic.

02-039

Pack 02-039, *Dwarf Command Group*, contains six figures for $4.50. The first is the *dwarf leader* described above. The second is a standard-bearer who is also richly dressed, but with no visible armor. He wears a dragon-ornamented helmet and has a sword at his belt. The standard he holds is a cloth-wrapped staff topped by a skull. The remaining four figures are the regimental band, two drummers, and two playing serpent-shaped horns.

TA-HR Company, Inc., P.O.Box 1854, Bloomington, IN 47401, offers their PF-02 pack of eight different dwarfs for $3.50. They average about 20mm from head to foot, and were sculpted by Brian Apple. The unusual thing about these dwarfs is that half of them are female, making them of great interest to those of us who feel the ladies of that race have been too long ignored by crass humans who can't tell the difference. These female dwarfs are of the fair (i.e., unbearded) variety, and are dressed in tunics and trousers for practical coverage in their travels. One might ask that they be given some armor, too, but as their male counterparts are similarly unprotected we must assume that the sculptor doesn't believe in the stuff. You can always imagine that their tunics cover well-wrought dwarven mail, of course.

The figures are nicely sculpted, although a bit of more refined handling of facial features could have made them more attractive. The faces are reasonably modeled, however, and are expressive, so don't be put off by my wish for perfection. The two newest figures in the group, the female with book and the male with hammer show improvement in this regard as well. One of the

TA-HR Male Dwarfs

ladies stands with crossbow loaded but not aimed, waiting for a target to show himself. Another strides forward with sword and shield raised, a scabbard slung over her back out of the way. The third is in the process of charging up over a rock, her shield in her right hand raised to parry, and her axe coming around in a swing from the left. The last of the figures stands holding an open book in her right hand and gesturing with her left. She could be used as a mage, cleric, or sage figure.

The first of the male dwarfs, like all the females, wears no hat or helm. He stands reaching into his back-slung quiver to reload his recurved bow. The next male holds a short-hafted battleaxe with both hands (it looks so massive one wonders how he can swing it).

TA-HR Female Dwarfs

He and the next two males wear jaunty hats. The third holds sword and shield ready for combat. The last male holds a warhammer raised in his right hand and a shield in his left. All the dwarfs are dressed in what look like fancy outfits that should paint up well in the bright colors typical of the dwarven kind. □

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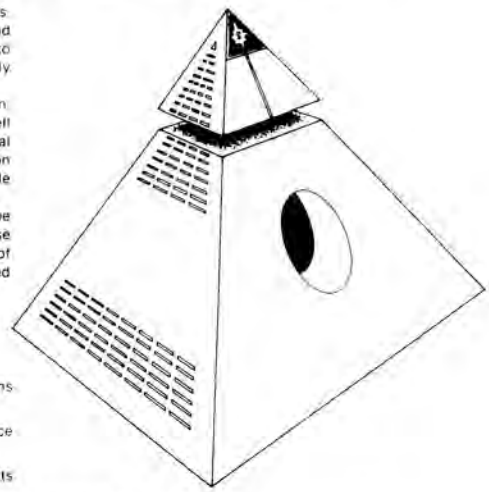

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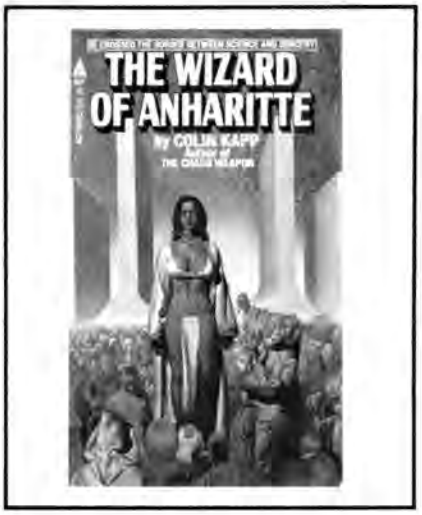

The Wizard of Anharitte, **Ace 1973; by Colin Kapp; $1.95**
Water Witch, **Ace 1982 by Cynthia Felice and Connie Willis; $2.50**

Reviewed by David Dunham

Wizard of Anharitte and *Water Witch* have several things in common. Both are science fiction, but are tied to fantasy by their titles, and by the way they treat some technology as being magical. In both books, a somewhat isolated planet is being visited by offworlders. The books differ in their treatment of this theme.

Take a less-developed culture, and introduce it to a more advanced one. Most of the time, the less-developed culture won't survive the encounter. In *Wizard of Anharitte*, a relatively backwards planet has, so far, continued to survive after meeting spacefarers. The planet of Roget has only one spaceport, in the city of Anharitte. Both the space merchants and the powers that rule Anharitte find this arrangement to their financial advantage. The problem is that one of the local lords, known as the Wizard of Anharitte due to his reputed magical powers, is trying to contaminate Anharitte "with ideas like democracy, civil liberty, and other corrosive notions." This would cause the slaves (the economic backbone to Anharitte) to revel, and would establish a new order not nearly as nice for the other lords and the traders. The Company would lose lots of money if this were to happen (as Anharitte is one of the few Free Trade exchanges), so they intend to break the Wizard's power, at first through economic, political, and psychological means, and when this doesn't work, through open warfare.

This is classic science fiction. The main plot is the conflict between the Company and the Wizard, but the cultural clash between Anharittic and off-world values is not neglected. Not everything is what it appears to be on the surface; in fact, it's not always clear just who are the good and the bad guys, as the story and the main character develops. An entertaining read.

I also found *Wizard of Anharitte* fascinating as a possible scenario for *Traveller, Space Opera,* and other SFRPGs. It shows how technology and feudalism might coexist (for example, hovercraft aren't allowed inside Anharitte without people running alongside, pushing them around corners with poles) — an excellent opportunity to use the more primitive weapons mentioned in the SFRPGs. The author shows how effective these can be. An imaginative example is the nearly untraceable killing committed by shooting an icicle from a crossbow. When the icicle melts, no evidence!

Player characters could probably be hired as troubleshooters for the Company, with orders to use minimal technology. Introducing too much technology may have the same destabilizing effect as introducing radical ideas, and besides, the planetary government might try to kick the Company off the planet. The characters' mission would be to take whatever steps are necessary to neutralize the Wizard, preferably staying within the law. Generous funding is available for hiring local mercenaries, bribes, etc.

A referee can use this scenario idea without even having read the book. If you do, you'll have to decide whether the Wizard in fact has magical powers, is very clever, or uses high technology. You may also want to invent additional regulations the planetary government may have adopted to keep Roget free from off-world influence. If you do read the book, you'll find many plot twists and obstacles you can use on your players.

SHE COULD CONTROL THE PRICELESS WATER SUPPLY OF A DESERT WORLD —OR SO SHE CLAIMED...
WATER WITCH
a novel by
CYNTHIA FELICE & CONNIE WILLIS

Water Witch is set on the planet Mahali, a desert world. On such a dry planet, water is of prime importance ("All wars on Mahali have been fought over water"). The City in the Red Cave controls all the fresh water on the planet, and thus the planet; the royalty of the City is careful to keep their water knowledge secret in order to maintain control. In past times, a water witch (one sensitive to the direction and quantity of water) monitored the planet's water, but political squabbles have left the City without a water witch. The Princess of the City pretends to have water sensitivity, but actually tracks the water levels by computer.

The offworlders in *Water Witch* are the Kalmarrans, who originally colonized Mahali, but were long cut off from it by interstellar wars. While they do have access to some technology unavailable on Mahali, the Kalmarrans are destabilizing politically, not socially or technologically. They are the only force capable of contesting the City's control of the planet.

The main character is Deza, a girl whose father's spirit has apparently taken up residence in a mbuzi, a small native animal which the Kalmarran Tycoon is raising — their hooves crystallize into gembone upon exposure to water. Deza and her father (before his death and subsequent transfer to the mbuzi) had fooled the Tycoon's family into believing she was a water witch, but she runs across a group from the City, who know she isn't one, but keep quiet about it. As she continues the con, the stakes mount, both for her and her planet. The action ranges from high-level politics to desert survival, until the climax. All capably done.

I think the setting would be easier to use in a campaign than the storyline situation. Part of the action takes place in underground caves, no longer used for travel, but which still serve as water channels. In some places there are traps — areas where the floor suddenly drops away, but is covered with water. In other places there are sluice gates, controlled by the City's computers, which can either block off escape or release water into your tunnel.

As mentioned earlier, both books deal with an offworld influence on an isolated planet, a topic usually ignored in SFRPGs; most campaigns seem to assume that their worlds are in some sort of communication with each other. But some interesting scenarios can be placed on a planet that recently established contact with your group of worlds. Depending on the advancement of the planet, the offworlders could be treated as anything from gods to equals. Some planets may welcome contact; most will find it destabilizing in one fashion or another. The protectionist sentiment hitting the United States over Japanese imports is nothing compared to what the reaction over extraterrestrial imports would be.

A referee could start characters out on an isolated planet, which would then be contacted by offworlders. The characters might view this as a ticket to adventure, but the local governments might enlist them to drive the offworlders back off-world, or at least to make their stay unpleasant. If the player-characters are on a ship visiting an isolated planet, they may get caught in the middle of a power struggle, as opposing sides try to take advantage of them. Just as easily, they could find the powers that be insulating them from the populace. While this reduces the disturbing influence, it also makes accomplishing a mission difficult. □

illustration by Jan Sherrel Gephardt

Universal Resolution Matrix

By Harry White

James Dunnigan, designer of well over a hundred games, says that plagiarism (use of available techniques) is one of the most important rules of game design. An item ripe for such plagiarism is tucked away on the last page of Chaosium's *Basic Role-Playing*. It is the Resistance Table which also appears in their *RuneQuest* rules. In both game systems, the authors use the table for relatively limited functions. Because they have other fine combat and encounter systems, the table is not used to its full potential.

The concept behind the Resistance Table is that a given active force has a certain chance of overcoming a given resisting force. The assumption is made that an active element has a 50% chance of overcoming an equal resisting element. As the relative power of the active and resisting forces change, then the percentage of success changes.

The Universal Resolution Matrix as shown below is derived from Chaosium's Resistance Table, but is modified to show a range of points from 1 through 20 rather than the percentages of the original. It is also somewhat truncated, and the labels on the rows and columns are changed. The columns labelled Source are numbered 1 through 20 to represent the relative power of the active element attempting to succeed in a task. The rows labelled Target, also numbered 1 through 20, represent the relative power of the resisting element. To find the die roll needed for success, cross-index the source and target values. The intersection shows the D100 roll needed for the source to succeed. The matrix is designed for use with one 20-sided die, two 10-sided dice, three 6-sided dice – anything that adds up to 20 or close to it.

In contests of strength in role-playing, the use of the matrix is straightforward and similar to the *Basic Role-Playing* system. For example, Bal Saphire, an adventurer with a strength rating of 13, is trying to move a balky pack mule with a strength of 18. Bal takes the initiative and gives a tug on the halter rope. Source element (Bal) equals 13. Target element (mule) equals 18. By cross-indexing the two elements you find that Bal will need to roll a five or less on 1D20. He fails, rolling a ten, and the mule doesn't budge. Now the mule decides to back up. The source and target positions are reversed, and the mule needs to roll a 15 or less. He rolls a 12, and Bal is jerked along, heels dragging, cursing all the way.

This concept can be used with other attributes. Consider *to hit* resolutions. Francois and Pierre, two French noblemen, are arguing over the affections of a well-known courtesan. Francois (the source) with a dexterity of 11 has a fit of pique and decides to slash Pierre (the target), also dexterity 11, across the nose with his silken gloves. The matrix shows that he needs a nine or less, because Pierre is using his dexterity to avoid the blow. Francois rolls a nine, and the gloves leave a mark on Pierre's cheek. Now Pierre, apparently blinded by anger, takes a swipe, rolls a 16, and Francois adroitly evades the attack.

Other applications come to mind. A would-be apprentice locksmith with a beginning locksmithing skill of 5 attempts to construct a lock with a reliability of 16. He can't succeed. The matrix indicates that he has a small chance of manufacturing a lock with a reliability of 14. So he works on a reliability 14 lock, trying every day, and finally succeeds after a week or two in completing it by making a roll of 1. A thief with a lockpicking skill of 6

would need to roll a 2 or less to defeat the apprentice's work.

Pierre, now wandering the streets and needing to reinflate his self-esteem, spots a pretty flower girl. His charisma is 13; her ego, the target element, is 12. Pierre, ever the predator, needs an 11 or below, and rolls a twelve. She courteously tells him to leave her alone.

Role playing will produce many other examples of the use of the matrix in determining success or failure. You have an easy time deciding if something happens. Deciding how much happens is another matter.

Bal, our adventurer with the recalcitrant mule, finally gets the animal going and locates the dragon he is after. Finding it asleep, he decides, even though his dexterity is the low average 9, that he might be able to dispatch the monster with his axe (his IQ is even lower than his dexterity). The dragon's usual dexterity is rated at 18, but, being asleep, his dexterity is rated at 1 (not zero, it may twitch in its sleep). Using the matrix, you determine that Bal needs to roll 18 or under to hit the beast. He rolls a 5 and hits. But how much damage did he do?

One way to resolve the damage is to assign points to weapons and calculate *overkill*. Bal's battle axe has a minimum damage potential of 4 points. He overkilled his roll to hit on the matrix by 13 (the 18 he needed minus his roll of 5). Add that 13 to the 4 points of the axe. Seventeen damage points. A mighty blow. Of course, the dragon's hide absorbs some of that, and the dragon can take much more damage anyway. The monster is now aroused and proceeds to fry Bal for his lack of judgment, letting the mule go happily on its way, thus confirming an old adage about sleeping dragons.

This matrix works, but you should adjust values to keep a balance in your system. Penalties such as broken or dropped weapons, or inflicting damage on yourself should be assessed for missing your roll by a wide margin.

Videshky, a spymaster, has intercepted a coded message sent by the Allies' coding computer, the Confusomat. The code complexity is high, 18, but Videshky's IQ is also 18. On the matrix he has a 50% chance of breaking the code, i.e., he must roll a 10 or less. He rolls a 20, a really bad roll. He not only fails to break the real code, but he thinks he understands the message, not even realizing he has not cracked the final cypher. He sends three of his top agents to their deaths and destroys his career.

The matrix is based on a scale of 1 to 20, and the examples use a 20-sided die. This gives a straight line on a graph; you have as much chance of rolling a 1 as you do a 20, or any number in between. Some pretty wild things can happen. Using three 6-sided dice gives a curve that rises from 3 to 10 and 11 and then falls off steadily to 18. Most rolls will be between 9 and 12 inclusive. If you generate characters with 3D6 and use 3D6 for resolution on the matrix, things may be a bit tame, because everything clusters around that 9 to 12 range. One compromise would be for you to generate characters using 3D6 or 2D10 and then use 1D20 on the matrix.

For those who like other number systems, multiply the matrix cells, rows, and columns by 5 and you have percentages. Expand it to include 1 through 100. Make it the currently popular one through ten. Unbalance it to give target or source an advantage. Fiddle with it.

You have a basic tool (admittedly a pirated one) in the Universal Resolution Matrix. Use it as the foundation for or a modification of a role-playing system, and you will find it to be quite flexible. However, in developing this tool you should be aware of Dunnigan's only other rule about designing games: keep it simple. □

UNIVERSAL RESOLUTION MATRIX

Target Element \ Source Element	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
01	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
02	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
03	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
04	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–	–	–
06	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–	–
07	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–	–
08	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–	–
09	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–	–
10	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	–
11	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
12	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
13	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
14	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
15	–	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	–	–	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14
17	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13
18	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
19	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10

For success, roll D20 equal to or less than the indicated number.

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illustrated by Luise Perenne

AD&D

Pregnancy and Adventure

by Colleen A. Bishop

This article complements the "Giving Birth" article that appeared in issue 20.

"But I don't want to retire her!" has rung out more than once after a Games Master has ruled a female character to be pregnant. Don't panic. Just because she's pregnant doesn't mean she can't go adventuring for the next few months, though there are a few difficulties in so doing.

Conception and Contraception

In the first place, there is only a small (say 3%) chance for a physically mature woman to become pregnant on any particular day. Even though pregnancy is expected of most medieval- or ancient-type women, there are herbal potions available to prevent it. These can be purchased most easily from an alchemist or wise woman. Amulets and other such magical means may also work.

Pregnancy: the First Three Months

Contrary to popular belief, most women (01-60 on D100) do not get morning sickness. Of those that do, it may be mild (61-80), moderate (81-98), or chronic (99-00). Mild morning sickness involves an hour or two of nausea each day with no penalties to any saving throws. Moderate morning sickness lasts for 6-8 hours each day, with a -1 to all saving throws vs. nausea. Chronic morning sickness involves a considerable amount of vomiting. It is strongly suggested that characters with chronic morning sickness retire for a time, since severe morning sickness lasts for the entire 9 months. Both mild and moderate morning sickness end after the first three months.

Most pregnant women (85%) experience wildly swinging moods. This will often serve to make a character act a bit Chaotic no matter what their alignment. DM's note: most gods understand this sort of thing, and will not penalize the pregnant character for alignment slippage, provided she straightens out again after the birth.

The pregnant character will fatigue easier during the first three months. Treat her as if her Constitution were 2 points less for endurance purposes.

Pregnancy: Months 4, 5, and 6

During the next few months, the wildly swinging emotions calm down somewhat, and weight gain becomes noticeable. Morning sickness and fatigue are usually no longer problems, though fitting one's armor on can be. Cravings for strange foods may send characters on short quests for roasted dragon tail, pickled unicorn horn, and other interesting things.

The baby will begin to kick during these months, making it more likely for

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spellcasters to break their concentration. There is a +10% chance for spell failure to spellcasters.

The growing size of the body and loss of balance will affect almost anything requiring agility (-15% from Climb, -10% from Moving Silently). This will include fighting – all characters fight as if they were one level lower, except for first-level characters, who fight at -1 on all *to-hit* dice.

Although 80% of all pregnancies are accompanied by backaches during these months, and some (12%) are severe enough to make temporary retirement necessary (for the duration of the pregnancy).

The Final Three Months of Pregnancy

During the final trimester of pregnancy, all characters will experience shortness of breath. Should she need to run, her speed will be reduced by 50% after the first turn. Walking will require three times as many rest stops, for her to get her wind back.

Insomnia is another common problem in these last few months (98% of women get this). This can actually be an advantage to the party – it never hurts to have an extra person on watch at night.

Frequent contractions and movements of the child greatly increase the spell failure rate (50%).

By the seventh month of pregnancy, the character will need body armor 1-4 sizes larger than usual. She will have to get a whole new set of armor if she wants to wear any.

Miscarriages and Premature Birth

Under ideal circumstances, labor will begin 36+1D4 weeks after conception. (The DM should roll up the exact time.) Any major trauma may cause an early birth.

During the first three months, there is a 50% chance of a miscarriage occuring whenever the character takes more than half her total hit points in damage. Miscarriages are preceded by severe cramping, so there are 2-12 hours available to reach a cleric if the character wants to save her baby. If the cleric is reached in time, a Cure Critical Wounds spell will save the child if it makes its system shock saving throw. Otherwise, the miscarriage occurs. The mother has a 25% chance of hemorrhage, in which case she must make a system shock roll as well.

During the second three months of pregnancy, a miscarriage will only have a chance of occuring if the character takes 3/4 or more of her hit points in damage.

Premature birth is a danger during the final three months. If the character is reduced to half her normal hit points or less, or loses a life level to a creature such as a wight, there is a 75% chance of going into immediate labor.

Labor and Birth

Labor takes 4-24 hours for a first child, and 1-10 hours for subsequent children. A character in labor can do nothing more than walk. During the last quarter of labor, she will be in extreme discomfort and cannot move.

At the end of labor, the baby is born. Both mother and child must make system shock rolls for survival (the child has its own constitution to roll on). If the child is premature, subtract one from its constitution for each full week between its actual birth and the due date. The child's system shock roll must be made at this lower constitution. The lowered constitution will raise back up to the child's normal amount at the rate of 1 point per week.

After Birth

Since young children are very noisy when not asleep (and they never seem to sleep more than an hour or two at a time in the first few weeks), a character may wish to retire for a few months. There are alternatives. A wet nurse could be hired to nurse the child for its first year of life. Most peasant women will be happy to take on this chore for a few silvers a week (depending upon how poor the local peasants are).

Once the child is weaned, if the mother still wishes to adventure, it may be sent to live with the character's family if she has any. If not, or if they are too far away, the child could be placed with a local family for care between expeditions. Almost all poorer families would be blad to accept the support money that should go along with the child.

So, next time your DM rules a female character pregnant, don't panic. It needn't be a major disaster ... just a minor inconvenience. □

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Adventure by Design

This column is devoted to providing game mastering and scenario designing tips to gamesmasters of all types.

By Paul Jaquays

Getting Started: Ideas and Theme

To the artist, writer and game designer, a blank sheet of white paper is possibly the greatest stumbling block. Getting past that block and actually designing something is often an act of creativity in itself.

But where does inspiration come from and what can be used as a source of good adventure ideas? The game designer has to draw on his or her own imagination. But, when imagination fails, the best cure is reading.

If you've been playing adventure games for any length of time, you are probably aware that adventure fiction, history books, comic books and other game adventures are all good places to do research for the imagination. Many of my own game adventures were inspired by my readings. Note that I use the word inspired, not borrowed or copied. Although there is no problem in using someone else's material in a personal campaign, it is definitely not a good idea to include the same in a commercial adventure. Put nicely, such copying is called plagiarism. Put bluntly, it's theft.

Still, it is possible to use other writer's material as inspiration for your own work. *Dark Tower,* an *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* adventure, was loosely based on the conflict between Mitra and Set, gods of Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age. All the ruined city stories that I had ever read provided the groundwork for *Duck Tower,* the *RuneQuest* scenario. *The Enchanted Wood,* for *DragonQuest,* was an attempt to capture in a game adventure part of the dark whimsey from Piers Anthony's *Xanth* novels.

When you are perusing someone else's work for inspiration, remember Rule of Thumb 1:

Don't borrow specific names, characters, places or plots. You won't be fooling anyone.

Things that can usually be assimilated with very little difficulty include general outlines for plots, character motivations and the situations in which characters find themselves. However, even if you are designing a personal campaign, avoid trying to recreate someone else's fiction in game form. A player will recognize what you are doing, and the fun will be spoiled.

Along with reading books, refamiliarize yourself with the rules of the game. Even if it's a game you regularly play, review them again. Think of the unusual uses to which the game rules can be applied. Also take a look at other game adventures, especially those that you like. Analyze what makes them good.

While doing your research, keep a notebook handy. Write down notes on the things that catch your interest. Don't lose a possible brainstorm because you forgot to record it. Your notes can either be quite detailed or just mnemonic reminders, whatever works best for you. I find that it is often an excellent exercise to just sit with a notebook in hand and think about things that might make for a unique encounter, an unusual find or a strange occurence in a game adventure. Often what comes to mind is no more than a fragment of a sentence, but it serves to act as a springboard for a later adventure. The Found Encounter section of *Griffin Mountain* was created in this manner, while the adventures in *The Book of Treasure Maps* and *The Hellpits of Nightfang* all developed out of a process where I wrote down a group of adventure titles that sounded interesting.

Once you have a selection of ideas, choose several (such as a sinister tower owned by a wizard, and an evil, haunted forest) and link them together. These ideas form the nucleus out of which the rest of the adventure will naturally grow.

The next step is to organize your thoughts into an orderly format. Your ideas must be gelled into a basic concept for the adventure. This concept is what I call theme.

Every adventure has a theme, whether or not the creator intended for it to be there. Theme is both the overview of the adventure and the concept which binds all the individual elements of an adventure into a cohesive unit.

The formal organization of a theme is a not too difficult step in the adventure design process. Theme is usually expressed as a statement, a sentence complete with a subject and a predicate. 'A wizard's tower in an evil forest' is not a theme. It lacks action and motivation. It lacks a verb.

If we turn this sentence fragment into a complete sentence, we get a more satisfying theme for an adventure: 'the players' characters must rescue a young Prince who is held captive in a wizard's tower in an evil forest.'

The statement now describes the situation, tells where the action will take place and defines the actions that must be taken by the adventurers to accomplish their mission. It provides the skeleton for the entire adventure. Such an adventure might begin with a worried king commissioning a group of hard-bitten mercenaries to rescue his son from a vile wizard. A dark wood full of loathsome monsters will prevent access to the tower where he is held.

In general, each theme describes *who* are the participants in the adventure, possibly including the major foe; *what* is the motivation for the adventure and what action should be accomplished during its course; and *where* do the events of the adventure take place.

Note that the theme rarely reveals the details of the adventure, but only outlines them. Details like geography, characters, mythology and treasure are added as the adventure is fleshed out and should all contribute to the theme. If the adventure concerns the rescuing of a young prince from an evil wizard's castle, all facets of the adventure should focus on that rescue. Extraneous details should be eliminated. In such cases, apply Rule of Thumb 2:

If you don't need it to develop the story line of the adventure, don't include it.

But, if you have an exceptional idea for part of the adventure that really doesn't fit the theme, don't hesitate to apply Rule of Thumb 3:

If necessary, change the theme.

Now that you have your ideas and have defined them as a theme it is time to expand these into an adventure.

Next issue: Outlining Your Ideas, or ... Beating Order Into Chaos. □

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QUICK PLUGS

The spate of new releases for Origins has not arrived yet. Much more next issue, for sure.

NEW ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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TASTE MY STEEL! — This is a swashbuckler RPG designed by Don Johnston. This 56-page booklet contains rules on swordmanship, training, work, hit location, armor, shields, swordplay, locked blades, multiple foes, missile weapons, firearms, brawling, swinging on ropes, slicing candles, tricks with food and drink, gambling, romance, etc. There is also a section on creating adventures, campaigns, and NPCs. Available from the Phantasy Network, c/o Ted Shelton, 3076 Mercedes Ave, Davis, CA 95616.

D&D BASIC SET

THE LOST CITY — This is a 28-page adventure designed by Tom Moldvay for character levels 1-3. This module describes a lost city in the desert. The basic adventure is the exploration of the upper levels of a step-pyramid. The pyramid is the largest building in the ruins with 100 areas to explore. The underground city has 19 areas to explore. Also included are further adventure notes, new monsters, glossary, and ready-to-play characters. Published by TSR Hobbies, Inc.

RUNEQUEST

SOLOQUEST — Designed by Alan LaVergne, this 80-page book contains three solo-scenarios for *RuneQuest*. "DreamQuest" takes you through combat with four foes and a surprise encounter at the end. "Phony Stones" has you looking for a counterfeiter of Issaries statues. You have to sort through the inhabitants of ten houses to figure out this puzzle. In "Maguffin Hunt," you have to retrieve the valuable maguffin from the intricate labyrinthine tunnels in the dwarven mountains. Available for $8 from Chaosium Inc., PO Box 6302, Albany, CA 94706. Add $2 for postage and handling, Calif. residents add appropriate 6% or 6½% sales tax.

TFT

THE FOREST LORDS OF DIHAD — Designed by Richard Meyer, this 32-page booklet comes with a 17"x11" map. The book contains descriptions of Dihad, its major personalities, life in the woodlands, a scenario, a city, gargoyles, and random encounters. Available from Gamelords Ltd., 18616 Grosbeak Terr, Gaithersburg, MD 20879.

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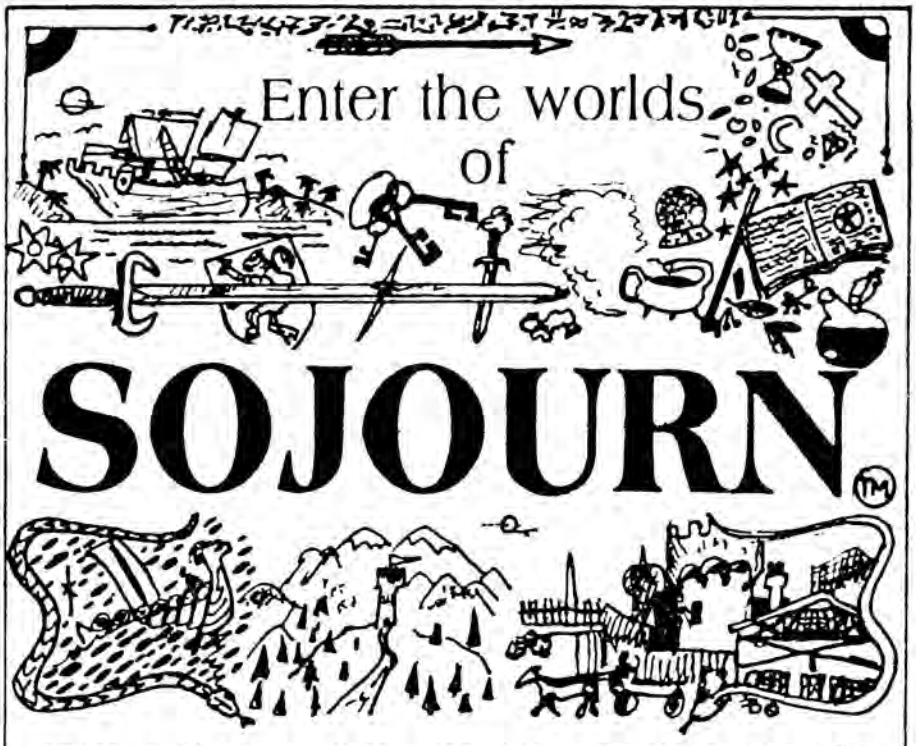

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REVIEWS

TROLLPAK

By Greg Stafford and Sandy Petersen
Chaosium, Inc.
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Reviewed by Ken Rolston

Chaosium has always published the finest scenarios, both in terms of content and format. From *Apple Lane* and *Snakepipe Hollow* through *Griffin Mountain*, and most recently with *Borderlands*, their published game aids have become the model and standard for scenarios and modules immediately upon publication. *Trollpak* similarly establishes with its release the model for a detailed treatment of a nonhuman race for fantasy role-playing. Not only is it well-organized for use and designed to be adaptable to various gaming styles, but it is readable and full of humor and drama. It provides information on trolls, of course – from their myths and natural history to detailed descriptions of their rich and exotic culture. It also provides a valuable source of information about the history and geography of Glorantha, *RuneQuest's* epic campaign background, as well as a bestiary of insectoid creatures that are fundamentally interwoven into the complex society of the trolls

The package consists of three bound referee's books, two additional scenarios, player materials, and a map of a major center of troll culture, Dagori Inkarth, with a playing field printed on the back for the mini-game included called Trollball.

Book One *Uz Lore*, details the mythological history of the troll. In a magical world like Glorantha, the mythology of a culture corresponds almost literally to the prehistory of real world creatures, in addition to being a map of the psychology of the creature. Knowledge of the mythology provides a firm foundation for comprehending the alien motivations and culture of the troll. A history of the trolls is also provided, covering the rise and fall of their fortunes since the beginning of measured time. This history also provides a great deal of information about Glorantha, adding to the material found in *Cults of Prax* and *Cults of Terror*. Then, the natural history and physiology of the troll is examined, down to a diagram of a dissected troll with explanatory notes. The physiology of the troll is distinctly alien; his ability to eat almost anything distinguishes him dramatically from man, and his senses contrast with man's in type and sensitivity. Throughout the linear and organized exposition on these subjects may be found marginal notes that are both charming and illuminating. This format encourages you to drift from the linear treatment to savor little tidbits of culture and history, making the reading pleasant and entertaining. Such marginal notes include: details of troll etiquette, ritual, and body language; the troll's unusual sonar sense and its workings; fragments from philosophers; troll ecological requirements; and speculations on the sources of the troll's enmity for the dwarven and elven races. Also included is a detailed treatment of the social and personal organization of one large clan of trolls, done with the loving touch of an anthropology major, and a discussion and description of the troll's interdependence with their preferred domesticated creatures – the giant insects.

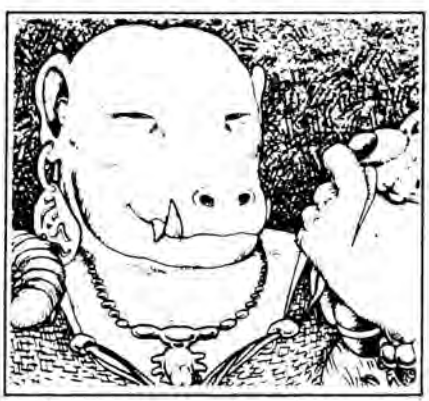
Book Two is the *Book of Uz*, a source detailing the creation and use of trolls as player-characters and non-player-characters. There are guidelines for playing the troll as a player-character, with rules for previous experience to permit play as something other than a beginning troll. Notes are given describing the growing up of a troll and his ritual acceptance into adult society. The numerous cults of the trolls, only mentioned elsewhere, and fully detailed – Xiola Umbar, Argan Argar, Aranea, Gorakiki, and the Hunter. Here also may be found more detail for Kyger Litor and Zorak Zoran. This book also contains the stats for the industrial and herd insects, some new troll subspecies, and a glossary of troll-related terms.

Book Three, *Into Uzdom*, contains scenarios, encounters and tables, and guidelines for creating NPCs. "Skyfall Lake" is a "friendly" visit to a troll village – friendly in the sense that the trolls mean no harm, though their customs and cuisine may present serious threats to a human's health and peace of mind. "Grubfarm" is a visit to a large insect farm run by trolls, either as traders or as raiders. "Flying Trollkin" is a very unusual scenario where the party must rescue a kidnapped friend from an airborne and formidable band of trollkin. The "Sazdorf Clan" and "Sazdorf Ruins" is the only scenario that vaguely resembles a dungeon, letting the players either assault the Sazdorf or solicit their permission to explore the tunnels of the ruins. The defenses and personalities of the Sazdorf Clan are well-detailed, providing an ample challenge, either diplomatic or martial. Finally, in this book are the rules for Trollball, previously published in another form in *Wyrm's Footnotes Number 7*. This game is marvelously entertaining, as well as providing a graphic illustration of the violent and vibrant troll culture.

Also included in the box are two separate scenarios called "The Munchrooms," which provide for the players to support either of two sides in a conflict. On one hand, the players may support a group of rebellious, freedom-loving trollkin; on the other hand, they may assist the trolls in quelling the rebellion and teaching the trollkin their proper place in the social order. These are large scale melee confrontations, providing for a great deal of strategy and tactics.

The map of Dagori Inkarth covers the important areas described in the pack, and the reverse side of the map is a hexagonally-printed game board of the Trollball field. Also included are player handouts, designed to be duplicated and given to players, containing background fact and rumor concerning certain aspects of the scenarios they will face.

The virtues of *Trollpak* are numerous; the most striking is the entertaining and amusing style of presentation. The humor is delightful. With the troll's rather awesome gustatory habits, the menu from Thunderbreath's Restaurants is marvelous. "All [meals] include vegetable garnish, human ale, and an edible wooden platter." "Live ham beetle, pinned to your plate with a sharpened sprig of runner. Roof rats on the side and a delicious cockroach sauce." The troll eating habits are an endless source of horror and humor. One marginal note details an experiment by a scholar intending



to study the eating preferences of a troll by locking him in a room with a large number of objects and watching to see which he ate first. Here is the list of the objects he ate on the first day: a vellum scroll, two sealskin boots, a leather vest, a beaded Praxian headband, 50 grams red sealing wax, a tomato, a potato, a cork, two liters sea water, an oaken staff. It is one thing to be told abstractly that a troll can eat anything; it is much more effective to provide a twelve day listing of what he chose to eat. The Trollball game, too, is a marvel of humor, satirizing our traditional game of football, more refined in some ways, but containing most of the same basic values of physical prowess and mayhem.

Beyond its good humor, the pack is eminently readable. As I have said, the text is relieved by marginal notes, and it is well-organized and coherently written. Aside from some lapses in proofreading, it is a very clean composition.

The dramatic possibilities of the text are very satisfying. The troll is portrayed as an unrefined but vigorous race,with strong emotions and heroic gestures. Their history is a tragic tale of waxing and waning power, and the Curse of Kin, which means that now most troll births are degenerate trollkin rather than true trolls, gives the troll a pathetic dignity as he confronts a declining destiny. The trollkin themselves, despised as inferior mutants, kept as slaves and food, present an appeal for freedom and justice that calls to the sensitive adventurer. Each scenario presents dramatic conflicts that rarely can be simply resolved by a good bloodbath; the players must engage their sense of honor and humanity as well as their melee weapons.

The materials are organized for ease of use by the referee. The player's information sheets provide a rapid, yet in-character source of information about the scenarios, and may be easily duplicated for distribution to the players. Each book is indexed for easy reference, and the books and materials are well-illustrated with maps and drawings which provide added detail and atmosphere for each scenario.

Trollpak is marvelously ingenious and inventive in portraying the troll. It is, as it claims, "the first game aid that completely describes an alien race." Out of the many details of mythology, history, physiology, and psychology comes a culture that is consistent and credible. It should serve as a model for not only fantasy role-playing games, but for science fiction games like *Traveller*, in the logical development of the biology and culture of a nonhuman race.

The package is designed to be adaptable to the needs of many different syles of fantasy role-playing. Though there is a strong encouragement toward role-playing, with specific suggestions along that line in the prefaces to the scenarios, in this pack is something for every style of player. For the power gamer, there are many opportunities to improve your character's abilities and wealth. For the wargamer, there are several very challenging assaults and tactical problems against imposing odds. For the role-player, there are detailed stage directions and suggestions for dialogue, and carefully described personalities to complement the NPC stats. For the story-telling style, the player has a broad choice of themes and narrative hooks upon which to hang his tale, and rich characters and settings to develop.

This book is also a good source of information about Glorantha. For those of us who struggled along for years trying to run a campaign in Glorantha, using whatever marginal hints we could glean about the world from minute references here and there in numerous sources, it is a relief to find this material organized and available in one place, with some coherent sense of sequence of time and causation. Though much more of this type of material will be needed before any player can feel truly comfortable in running a strictly Gloranthan campaign, this product is a step in the right direction.

Trollpak contains some very interesting new creatures, mostly of the insect variety. It adds these creatures within the context of their relationship to troll culture; this is not just another list of weird-looking things to munch on your characters; the insects fit into the economics and industry of the trolls, performing most of the same function as are performed by the larger mammals in our culture — food animals, beasts of burden, and pets. There are also some new types of troll which may have applications in some campaigns.

The current version of Trollball is improved over the original publication in *Wyrm's Footnotes*, though it is hardly a perfectly designed game. The rules are not well illustrated, and require application of common sense in ambiguous situations, but it is not intended to be taken terribly seriously, and in that context may provide several evenings of fun and frolic in the coarser aspects of troll culture. It is certainly amusing reading in itself, and it is appealing to imagine an all-human team of all-stars taking on the league powerhouse, the Sazdorf Wackers And Tacklers (the SWAT team), for whom stats are provided.

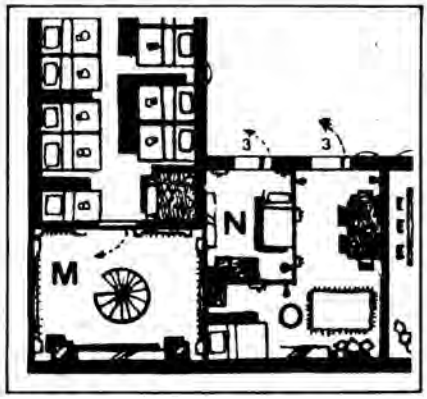
I would like to caution gamesmasters about using the plentiful opponents provided in most scenarios. The armies of trollish and insectoid foes are a little intimidating even to the veteran *RuneQuest* referee. With *RuneQuest's* detailed melee combat system, it is unfair to expect the referee to be very effective marshalling his hordes of ten or twenty beings while the players are struggling gamefully to take care of one character apiece. The referee should try to arrange things so he will never have to be operating more than a few creatures at a time; otherwise it is unlikely that he will be able to keep up with the players in resolution of the melee rounds or in commanding his forces as formidable enemies.

How well will these materials adapt to other gaming systems? For one thing, I particularly recommend their use for science fiction gaming. As a primitive alien race, the troll is far better detailed, and far more attractive and entertaining than any other BEMs (Bug Eyed Monsters) designed specifically for SF game systems. For users of other game systems like *D&D* and *Tunnels and Trolls*, I recommend *Trollpak* as a model for transforming the typical notion of nonhumans as either humans-with-nifty-advantages (*D&D* elves and *T&T* dwarfs) or as bug-eyed monsters to be slain instantly when encountered. The scenarios themselves may be adapted for other systems, often with relatively little work. The main motivation for adapting these materials for other systems is simply that no other system has game aids this good. Even TSR, with its high standards for materials and appearance, and Gamelords, with their *Free City of Haven*, have not achieved the impression of internal logic with the narratives or the cultures in which the narratives are worked out. No other system has much more than a couple of paragraphs devoted to the monsters, with the possible exception of the *Dragon* articles on non-human races and gods, which I have not found very satisfying, though I applaud their intent.

In summary, this is a remarkable package, the new standard for the role-playing game industry, full of fun and drama, and providing useful information in an organized and comprehensive fashion. For *RuneQuest* gamers, this package is a must; for gamers using other systems, this package should be read just to show what can be done to make the tradition orcish tackling dummy into a magnificent creation, worthy of our understanding and respect, and because of our respect, all the more worthy an opponent or friend. □

CITYBOOK 1
Edited by Larry DiTillio
Flying Buffalo
$15
Reviewed by Patrick Amory

CityBook I is a generic role-playing aid, applicable to all game systems, a phenomenon happily becoming more and more common in the gaming world. It also pre-



sents a unique idea to assist fantasy role-playing gamesmasters: the modular city.

In fact, the various shops and establishments of *CityBook I* are not necessarily intended to make up a complete city: they are designed to be inserted into cities already designed by the GM, thus saving the drudgery of creating numerous of small shops and NPCs.

Each shop is laid out in the same format (generally about five pages long): an introduction including a general description and details peculiar to the establishment, the layout of the shop (including room-by-room descriptions and detailed floor plans), personalities containing complete descriptions (with no stats) of the major NPCs, with an illustration of the owner, and scenario suggestions.

This book is sure to save any GM a great amount of work. Every shop is covered in exquisite detail, down to placement of chairs and tables. The illustrations are fair — but the pictures of the shopowners, by Liz Danforth, are truly stunning; veritable works of art which carry across quite clearly the personality of that character.

CityBook I includes quite a variety of establishments; a couple of inns, a leech, a bath house, weapon shops (too many of these), bakeries, a clocktower, a guild (only one), a temple, barracks, a jail, and more. There are thousands of scenario possibilities, and in the back is a list of scenario connections between NPCs and shops from all over.

In quite another way the book encourages thoughtful design of fantasy cities; with the drudgery of creating each shop gone, GMs will have time to concentrate on social structure, politics, customs, and other important facets of life in a city. Of course, the various establishments of *CityBook I* conform to no one culture, and doubtless some name-changing will be in order.

This brings us to the book's main flaw: according to the introduction, it is meant to have a medieval flavor. It fails utterly. Either the folks at Flying Buffalo know nothing about the middle ages, or else they won't commit it to paper. Consider: a character called Dimson Rumpchunk, houses and shops set back from the street in gardens, armchairs (!), beds neatly made up hospital-style with blankets turned over sheets, a taxidermy museum, display cases, etc. Most of these are mere details, but they succeed in removing the medieval-fantasy aura and in replacing it with a strong twentieth-century mood, becoming in places so flippant as to compare to the worst scenarios on the market.

In a totally different way, the authors feel a need to add some fantasy to *every* shop — there are almost no "normal" establishments. I suppose GMs would add those themselves anyway, but it would have been nice if Flying Buffalo had established a precedent here.

In the end, however, it is the style of the GM that will determine a campaign's flavor, not the contents of his gaming supplements. *CityBook I* represents a stride forwards in FRP supplements, and there are more to come. Despite the rather steep price, this work is fairly useful and well-done. I recommend it.□

MASTERS OF THE MIND

by Charles Wilson
Judges' Guild
$7.95
Reviewed by Anders Swenson

Masters of the Mind is an extensive treatment of parapsychological powers for adventure games. The book takes the form of a center-stapled 8½ by 11 inch booklet 80 pages long, including paper covers. (The cover claims that the work has 96 pages — it doesn't make that much difference!)

The book is intended for use with most FRP systems, but seems most oriented to *D&D* type games. The degree of psionic ability is determined by rolling 5D20 and indexing the result against a chart. With a roll of five twenty-sided dice, a normal distribution will cause the great majority of rolls to fall below the value of 80, which is the minimum roll for a fully psionic character. Barring a great amount of fudging, these rules will not apply to the great majority of FRP characters. Fully psionic characters then roll a percentile to determine the value of their psychic potential. This score is indexed with values based on the normally rolled characteristics to determine the play values called psionic dominance and mental dexterity. An additional characteristic, psionic energy, is also dependent on psychic potential, and increases with the number of psionic powers the character has learned.

These powers are categorized as abilities, which govern a number of related skills. Each skill is defined in terms of the general effect, the possible range, and the minimum energy cost. These regular skills are followed by a list of extraordinary abilities which have not been categorized with the others.

The book continues with a description of psionic combat, with many examples, which help to elucidate a complex system. The possibility of a separate character class of people who choose to only develop their psionic prowess is developed in some detail, as is the process whereby a number of psionically trained characters may combine their mental efforts for enhanced results. A number of substances and devices to aid the use of psionics are considered and elaborated.

An appendix discusses the properties of different probability curves, and how the statistics and probability ranges given in the book may be altered to provide different distributions, depending on the individual GM and his conception of the campaign being run. There is a set of blank record forms to support the complexities of the rules, an article on 'Godly Psionics' for *Gods, Demigods and Heroes* players (or for *Deities and Demigods*) and a short listing of possible psionic artifacts, rather like magic items.

The impact of the game is that of a very complex rules system which is closely related to other sets of FRP psionics rules, but much less to fictional renderings of exotic mental powers. Unfortunately, for my taste, there is almost nothing which captures the flavor of either classical or contemporary psychic research in the world of living people. There is no evocation of witches, ghost hunters, early hypnotists, Egypt, or even the Rhine Institute, not to mention Soviet Russia. The result is a very complex game, almost rich enough in terms of rules to stand alone, which has less pertinence to the real world than a chess game does to a battlefield

The booklet certainly gives a structure in which interested players may play a game which evokes the names of fictional and FRP mentally based powers. I find the claim of the introduction that "psionic power is no less a potent force than technology or magic" to be pretentious and absurd. Absolute comparisons of this sort are pertinent only for the real world — in a game, each GM sets the balance between various forces available to the characters to please himself and/or the players.

Masters of the Mind is a complex, consistent expansion of the available rules simulating organically-based mind-over-matter type powers. A GM interested in expanding this portion of the Psionics rules in a campaign could make good use of this material, especially if paranormal powers were intended to dominate the game. The rules are lengthy, and both comprehensive and complicated, suffering from bad organization, not at all alleviated by the layout or typography. The rules hold together, but it is very hard to find important details in unrelated parts of the text. This is a useful supplement for a GM who wants an expansion of the *D&D* approach to psionic powers for his campaign, but may not prove to be a good investment for others.□

TRADING TEAM
By J. Andrew Keith
Marishal Adventures
$1.50
Reviewed by Tony Watson

Trading Team is the fourth in a series of folio adventures for *Traveller* from Marishal Adventures. The first three dealt with warship Stag and its adventures in the Spinward Marches as the Fifth Frontier War broke out. In this folio, the action has shifted to the Scotian Huntress, a Far Trader in the service of Caledon Ventures, a trading and mercantile concern. The scene is the Reavers' Deep sector.

The player-characters are the crew of the Huntress; no characters are provided, though the suggestion is made that they be of Scout, Navy or Merchant background. Given the nature of the adventure, a Hunter would be very useful, but he/she might make the adventure a little too easy. *Trading Team* could easily be slipped into an ongoing campaign. It is hoped that Marishal follows their own example and creates a short series of adventures centered around the Scotian Huntress. The concept of a small group of characters serving as an advance team for a trading company would seem to offer a number of interesting possibilities to explore.

The scenario is very straightforward. The trading team is to land on Htalrea, a primitive world falling within the sphere of influence of the Aslan Hierate. An Aslan corporation has monopolized trade with the planet, and Caledon Ventures hopes to break this grip to gain access to "risthscent." This commodity comes from the scent gland of a large predator, the risth, and is used in the production of expensive perfumes. Caledon hopes to move into this lucrative market.

The task of the pioneer team is to set up trade relations with the natives, who are a primitive and ritualistic people. Little is known about the natives, and the mission must be approached with care so as to not offend them and throw away chances for success. One of the native trade customs is the cause of the next step in the adventure: a hunt for a risth itself. Map and animal encounter table are provided.

Though overall the adventure is good, it does have a few weaknesses, the major one being the lack of information on the natives. I realize it is unfair to ask a great amount of detail from a four page adventure, but some ideas on dealing with the natives, communication (the question of languages is never brought up), and the costs of committing a faux pas are needed. There's very little physical information on the natives, save an interesting illustration. Native characters, should they be needed, could easily be generated by using the Barbarian tables in *Citizens of the Imperium*. Perhaps the adventure should have been presented in six or eight pages, instead of only four.

As was the case with the previous folios, *Trading Team* offers a quick but challenging short adventure that a referee and his group could play through in an evening. The illustrations are nice and the price is right. ■

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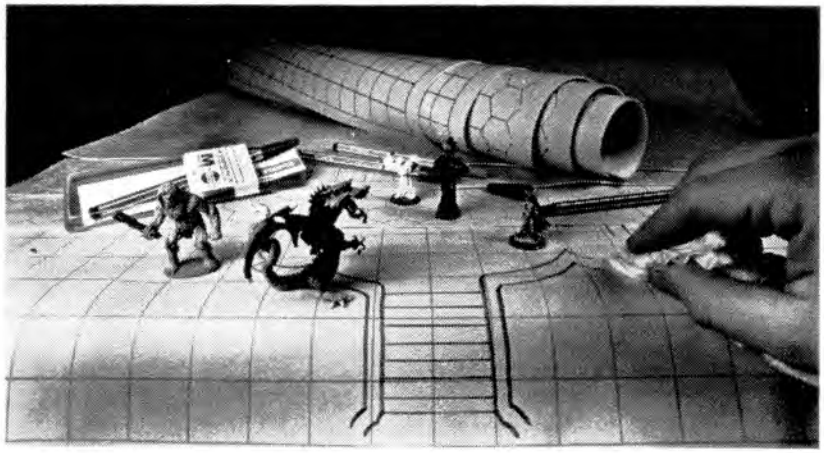

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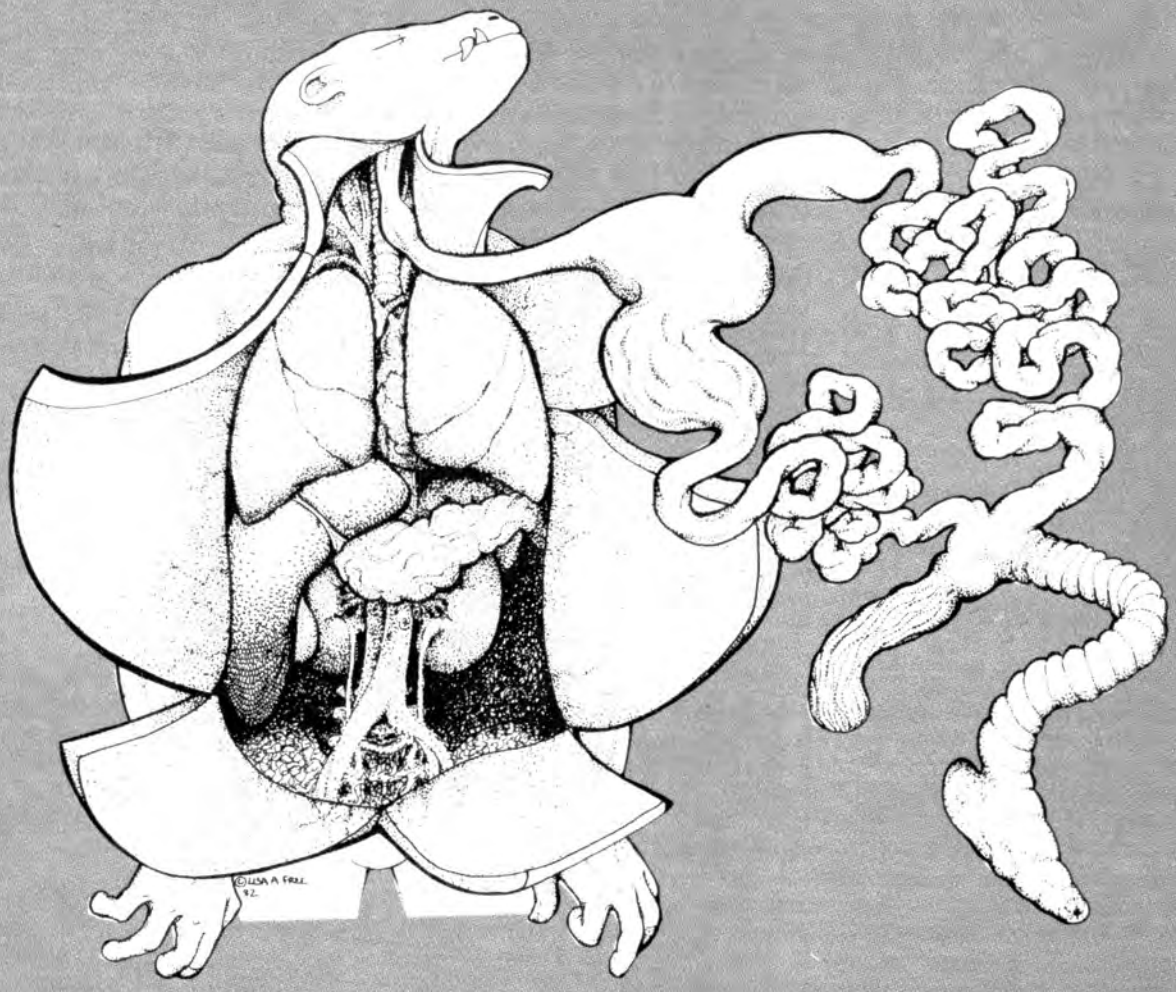

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The Sword of Hollywood

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INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MILIUS

John Milius is the writer-director of "Conan."

By Larry DiTillio

Greetings celluloid fanatics! Ye Ole Sword has a special treat for you this time around, an interview with none other than John Milius, the writer-director of **Conan.** *I met John at a writer's conference and asked if I could have a few comments on* **Conan** *for this column. He very graciously consented and so without further jabbering on my part, I present for your edification Mr. John Milius:*

DW: How did you get involved with *Conan?*

JOHN: When I was asked to direct *Conan,* I read Oliver Stone's original script, some of which was very good, but most of which was impossible to shoot. He had armies of mutants; 1,000 foot green snakes coming up out of the ground, terrific but it just couldn't be done. But I realized "My God, they're really going to do this movie, someone's going to do it and this is my last chance." Teddy Roosevelt, when he was going up the Amazon, they asked him why he wanted to do it and he said "This is my last chance to be a boy again" and this was my last chance to be a barbarian. I figured the civilizing influences would have their effect, but the idea of making a movie with Arnold Schwarzenegger and a bunch of giant Danes with snakes and beautiful girls and swords and things, well, I just couldn't turn it down.

DW: What was your concept of *Conan?*

JOHN: I wanted to do something that was like a primal Nordic myth, a Germanic myth. I was leaning in that direction, something that was simple, well, not necessarily simple, but primitive which is not simple at all, very sort of pagan and primitive and with style, without dialogue, more like a dance, like a ballet using music and motion ...

DW: It wasn't easy to make?

JOHN: No, no, it was a very physical, difficult movie to make. Arnold talks about it all the time. He was being eaten by dogs, and trampled by horses, he had the greatest time of his life, he was in absolute heaven! That guy has the strongest constitution! Once we were staying in this place in the bowels of Spain; Dutch and German financiers had tried to build a city there but malarial mosquitoes and swamps had driven them out, so there's sort of the ruins of a modern city there but there was one place that was habitable; it was barely habitable and Arnold said "Oh this is wonderful! A resort!"

DW. Let's talk about a few specific aspects of the movie. Thulsa Doom's cult, where did that come from?

JOHN: That was based on research I did on the Hashishin, the Assassins, who virtually ruled the Middle East at one time, and the Thugee in India. A lot of stuff in the movie came from actual incidents in the history of the Old Man of the Mountain (Hassan Ben Sabah – leader of the Assassin cult).

DW: What about the weaponry? You seem to have a fascination for weaponry in all your films.

JOHN: Well, weapons are magical things. For *Conan* we had about 5 or 6 swords made by a guy named Jody Samson in Burbank, but only one was finished to be a very fine weapon, the rest were serviceable steel prop weapons. That one cost $3,000 to make and that was a cheap rate. The swords weighed about nine pounds each, except for Valeria's which was lighter, made out of aluminum and fibreglass. We had to make Arnold's sword a little heavier though, because of his strength. A lighter weapon in his hands just didn't work right.

DW: How about that huge hammer?

JOHN: Sven Ole Thorson who played that part is the strongest man in the world and kind of the Jack LaLanne of Denmark. He has a picture of himself with the hammer, which is real, in all his gymnasiums in Denmark.

DW: What happened to the swords when the movie was over?

JOHN: (laughing) – Well, I have the best one, the rest were given out to people who deserved them for their work on the film.

DW: The actual swordplay in the film had a very Japanese-style flavor to it. Could you comment on that?

JOHN: We tried to avoid the medieval European style of fighting, in fact the fights were choreographed by a kendo master named Yamazaki. I believe that kendo and Japanese swordsmanship is superior to any other form of swordsmanship. Were you to take your finest English knight with his broadsword or Spanish Knight or whatever and put him against even a third-rate samurai, he'd be in pieces before he'd made his first stroke. It's a faster art with more strength, the metallurgy is superior, everything about it has style. European swordfighting isn't an art, it's just lumbering power, the other is an art, a combination of many things, a real skill. I wanted to give Conan the greatest skill he could possibly have, that's why in the plot he's taken east to Khitai and taught by these great masters who give you the idea that they are Japanese, or maybe their Hyborian forerunners.

DW: Did you do much research into the Hyborian Age?

JOHN: Well as much as you can do considering there was no Hyborian Age. I read all the stuff that was written about it and the books themselves. Everything in the movie is supposed to have an accurate place in the Hyborian Age, according to Howard's maps. The only thing I didn't read were the non-Howard *Conan* stories.

DW: I've talked to many Conan fans about the movie, I'm a Conan fan myself, and they've all told me that the movie disappointed them. And frankly I was disappointed too.

JOHN: Really? Most of the Conan fans I've talked to liked it. Glenn Lord liked it. (Lord is the executor of the Howard estate and probably the man most responsible for keeping the Conan saga alive over the years.) Why didn't you like it?

DW: *(John has now put me on the spot, due to my own big mouth)* Well, the story, all the background and motivation and philosophy you gave Conan. Most fans feel that Howard's Conan didn't require any deep reasons to act. He just acted.

JOHN: Well, other people feel that the movie was very true to Howard. My favorite Robert E. Howard stories are all very strong on motivation. *Worms of the Earth* for example. *(That is of course a Bran Mak Morn story, but John did have a point. Howard's best stories are strong on motivation.)*

DW: The slavery sequence was another part that bothered me. Conan would never have suffered slavery so long. He would have done something to free himself. And instead of simply becoming a pit fighter he would have been more likely to rip the man who set him loose off the horse and torn him to shreds.

JOHN: Hmm, that's interesting. But I don't think it would have been very realistic. A kid chained to this wheel by Vikings or something wouldn't resist.
DW: Agreed, but when he comes to manhood ...?
JOHN: Well, by then he's learned to accept it, he knows it would do no good. He does what's good, he learns to fight, becomes the best at it ...
DW: And then he's freed?
JOHN: Yes.
DW: That's my point. Conan was put into slavery many times in the saga and always freed himself, breaking his chains and killing his slavers. I found his acceptance of slavery very un-Conanesque.
JOHN: *(laughing)* Maybe it was too Japanese ...
DW: By the way, how did they like *Conan* in Japan? *(John had just returned from a promotional tour in Japan when I spoke to him.)*
JOHN: They loved it. They thought it was a Japanese movie.
DW: Another scene that bothered me was the scene where he gets the sword from the skeleton. That's of course right out of Howard, *The Thing in the Crypt.* What was that sword?
JOHN: That was the sword of his ancestors, the earth giants that are mentioned in the first sequence, the Atlanteans of which the Cimmerians are direct descendants ...
DW: I see. Well, I expected more in that sequence, something to jump out at him ...
JOHN: You expected him to fight the skeleton.
DW: Yes.
JOHN: Well, we've seen people fight skeletons in movies and it always looks crummy. I wanted that sword to simply be a gift from the gods, these earth giants who are his ancestors. That general, that old Atlantean general had been sitting there for a thousand years waiting to give that sword to Conan.
DW: Would you do a sequel to *Conan?*
JOHN: I don't think so. I think, right now, I've done all I want to do in that area.
DW: What are your plans for the future?
JOHN: I think I'll do a western next.
DW: Based on historical fact?
JOHN: No, an original. A classic western.
DW: What's a classic western?
JOHN: One with six-shooters.
DW: *(laughing)* Thank you John.

And that is a few choice words from John Millius. But before I go, I'd like to give an overall view of John, as a bit of an insight into film-making in general and **Conan** *in particular. John wrote the screenplays for* **The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean, Jeremiah Johnson, Evel Knievel, Magnum Force,** *and* **Apocalypse Now,** *a script he worked on for ten years before his friend Francis Ford Coppola brought it to the screen. He wrote and directed* **Dillinger, The Wind and the Lion, Big Wednesday,** *and* **Conan.** *John favors writing over directing, saying that "The best movie is the one in your head. I see a film as I write it and it never comes out as good on the screen." John defines himself as a "primeval storyteller, a man sitting around tribal fires, retelling the old legends and myths." He is very interested in history and is as much concerned with realism as he is with drama and more than anything else I think that it is his bent for realism that caused fans like myself to be disappointed with* **Conan.** *It is, in the final analysis, fantasy and I think that on the whole the film lacked the aura of fantasy that a less reality-inclined director might have brought to it. By the same token, I don't think* **Conan** *deserves quite the flak it has caught. There are many great scenes in it, and were it not* **Conan,** *I think fans might have been just a little bit gentler in their views. John does not apologize for the film, he considers it good and true to Howard and I think he is to be respected for undertaking a project which would have given recurring nightmares to any filmmaker. The most impressive thing about the guy is that for all his success he is a very straightforward, down-to-earth guy, without a trace of false ego or pomposity. He knew going into this interview that I hadn't liked* **Conan,** *and even that it had been roundly panned in these very pages, but this didn't stop him from taking time out of a very busy schedule to talk to me and never once was he hostile. In a town where weather-baloon-sized egos are more rife than flies on a ripe corpse, John is a rare and refreshing person to talk to. I hope he keeps telling us stories for many years to come.* □

THE SECRET OF NIMH

Producer/Director . . . Don Bluth
Story Adaptation. . . . Don Bluth
John Pomeroy
Gary Goldman
Will Finn
Music . . . . . Jerry Goldsmith

VOICES

Mrs. Brisby . . . . . Elizabeth Hartman
Jeremy. . . . . Dom DeLuise
The Great Owl . . . . . John Carradine
Justin . . . . . Peter Strauss

Reviewed by John Nubbin

There was a time, roughly from 1935 thru 1950, when almost all of the animation produced in this country was 'classical animation.' Classical animation is art of the highest quality; the characters move fluidly and fully through settings meticulous in detail, color and period of furniture, architecture, props and settings. One finds shadows and time-of-day lighting changes. When water splashes, the audience can see the splashes, and see through them as well. Mood changes in a scene are reflected in the color of the backgrounds; when feeling runs high, colors tend twards orange and red; when action calms down, blues and greens are used.

It is a tight, total process, one which imitates the world, and yet enhances it as well, all told through the artistic imaginings of the animators in charge.

The animators in charge of *The Secret of NIMH* are a dedicated group of men and women who feel it is time to return to such standards. They have spent the last three years preparing their vision for a new generation of fantasy film lovers, many of whom may have never seen a well-made animated feature in their lives. More than 1,000 background paintings were prepared for it; over 600 different colors were used in creating the film, 500 of them developed by the studio for the production. Living up to their artistic heritage, *NIMH* is the most lavish, the most beautiful animated picture made in this country in over 25 years.

Unfortunately, it does have its flaws.

In *NIMH*, the audience is introduced to Mrs. Brisby, a recently widowed mouse mother with a lot of problems. Besides having lost her husband, a mouse just about everyone in the forest and field seems to have known (something Mrs. Brisby is con-

stantly surprised at during the film), she has a son down with pneumonia. He can't be moved from the house, and yet he must, for their home is soon to be destroyed by the farmer who plans to start plowing soon (you can guess where home-sweet-home is). Trying to solve the dilemma of moving her family without killing her sickly offspring starts her off on a desperate quest which takes her to (as you may well guess) *The Secret of NIMH.*

NIMH turns out to be the National Institute of Mental Health, a place where rats, mice, monkeys, cats, et cetera are treated horribly in the name of science. Some mice and rats whose intelligence was accelerated by the institute's experiments escaped to set up a secret society under the farm. The late Mr. Brisby was one of them. Mrs. Brisby finds the society at a time when they are embroiled in turmoil. Some of them want to move their society to a secure valley, the others see no reason to move. Helping Mrs. Brisby becomes the means for the villains to gain the upper hand.

If all of the above seems sketchy, that is exactly how it is presented in the film. Scene changes come about with the barest of transitions; the internal logic which guides the characters is sometimes strained to the utmost as an obviously long, tightly-packed storyline is stuffed and jammed into an hour and a half of movie. By the end of the picture, the audience is left with a lot of questions; where is the safe valley? Why is it safe? How did the rats get magical powers as well as their higher intelligence? Et cetera, et cetera. These questions do not damage enjoyment of the film, especially for the young, who may not notice that anything is amiss, but they are an annoyance to the older viewers.

Despite the flaws in the storyline and its logic, though, *The Secret of NIMH* is well worth seeing. One must remember that *NIMH* is an animated feature. As in a comic book, the story line takes a back seat to the art. Good art can make up for a host of errors in a visual medium; the excellence of

some of the segments in Columbia's *Heavy Metal* almost saved the picture. *Wizards* was a box-office success only because of the visual beauty and horror running through the film. And, artistically speaking, neither of those entries come anywhere near the grace and quality of *NIMH*.

The superb technical refinements present within *NIMH* make it a joy to behold. Anyone appreciating good animation will enjoy the film. The Bluth studio is made up mostly of disgruntled artists trained by the Disney school. Put off by the cheaper, quicker techniques used by the Disney Studios after Walt's death, Bluth and his compatriots left Disney to found their own company, hoping to bring back the kind of animation which has been missing in this country for so long.

They have succeeded. Only the Disney studio comes close to the excellence present in *NIMH*. No one else producing animation in this country has turned out work such as this in over a decade. It is a stunning visual presentation, rivaling anything being done now in Japan, the world's present top animation producer.

NIMH also succeeds on another level. Besides displaying the best art produced in America for many a year, it embraces respect for its audience not often seen. Too frequently, modern American animators cloy their features with an overkill of sweetness. Misled by the sweetness of some of Disney's work, many studios (the current Disney studios included) have forgotten that Walt always balanced the sweet notes with plenty of sour, violent ones – the prince-dragon fight in *Sleeping Beauty*, the witch's death in *Snow White*, the rat/dog fight in *Lady and the Tramp*, and so forth.

Bluth has done the same. In *NIMH*, owls eat mice, cats prey on weaker animals, the intelligent rats battle, and they bleed when hit. It is not an overly violent or senselessly harsh film, but there is a feel for action and timing, and it balances the sweetness found in other parts of the film.

Since Walt Disney's passing, most animators (including his successors) seem to have forgotten or ignored the ingredients Walt discovered to be essential for an excellent animated feature: good art, a good story, action and excitement, and a happy ending. Bluth has forgotten none of these.

It is true that his story-telling is a bit rushed and muddled, but the quality and care used to bring all of the other necessities to the forefront more than make up for the occasional bump in the logic flow. *The Secret of NIMH* is a delight to watch, and good news for all lovers of quality animation. Not only because it is a fine film, but also because it gives us hope for more of the same (or better) from this new, quality-pledging studio.

One can only wish them success. □

"Beastmaster" will be the subject of John Nubbin's movie review next issue.

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by GIGI D'ARN

Dear Tadashi,

Some people do it for free, but my rival in gaming world gossip is now charging for his information. HOWARD BARASCH is publishing *The Insider* six times a year for $6. Order directly from him at 3304 Crater Ln, Plano, TX 75023. You can get a sample issue for $1. First issue is already out. It contains more in-depth analysis of selected events than I do, but none of my wit. It is certainly worth the price, however.

Adventure Gaming magazine temporarily ceased publication this summer when Ral Partha cut off its support. Editor TIM KASK reportedly raised $12,000 from private backers to buy the magazine's freedom from Ral Partha. Good luck, Tim!

Prentice-Hall will be distributing certain games in Metagaming's *The Fantasy Trip* series. It won't be long before new games will have simultaneous distribution through both book and game outlets.

E. GARY GYGAX Typewriter Department: Metagaming's *Interplay 7* actually contains a letter from him. Collectors take note.

What's all this brouhaha about Chaosium forcing TSR to remove *Elric/Cthulhu* material from *Deities & Demigods*? My source tells me TSR voluntarily removed the chapters so they wouldn't have to credit Chaosium.

Speaking of TSR, and I do that much too often, it's a good thing they didn't appear at ORIGINS this year or they would have had to answer to all those people with *Strategy & Tactics* and *Ares* lifetime subs. Hope they're ready at GENCON.

Other ORIGINS news: attendance was probably around 5000. The exhibit hall was air-conditioned and cool for the first time. Congratulations to Avalon Hill and DON GREENWOOD. This was the best ORIGINS yet.

Overheard at the Game Designer's Guild Annual Banquet and Beer Bash: "I'll join anything with the world 'guild' in it."

Another licensing pact signed: Avar Products will produce mounted "adventure boards" for *Traveller*. The boards will be printed with a variety of starship deck plans, player aids, and referee aids approved for use with *Traveller*.

ORIGINS traditions continue: Among the games that made it to ORIGINS sans box were Chaosium's *Trollpak* and Heritage's *Swordbearer*. Those titles were sold at a discount to fans who couldn't wait for the game box.

Dawn Patrol (TSR) claims on the cover that it is a "Role Playing Game of WWI air combat." However, the game is a tactical air combat game with four pages of role-playing rules in the pull-outs. *Caveat Emptor.*

Hero Games should have *Champions II* out by the end of the year. It will be a collection of supplementary articles for their popular superhero role-playing game.

Setting new standards in bad taste in gaming is *Alma Mater*, the high school role-playing game from Oracle Games in Canada, designed by STEVE DAVIS and ANDREW WARREN. The cover depicts sundry unappealing high schoolers including a fat gamer with a "Do it in a Dungeon" T-shirt. Among the roles you can play are cheerleaders, jocks, and losers. I don't remember if there was a "Grope Table," but there was a vivid illustration. Collector's item for sure.

Now that the two giants in the industry (Avalon Hill and TSR) are battling it out for the gaming dollar, I note that Avalon Hill pays royalties to E. GARY GYGAX for a game he designed years ago: no prize for those who can figure out the game title. Hint: it's still in print.

Heritage has obtained the licence to do miniatures for Hero Games' *Champions* game. They will be 25mm with modular, interchangeable components.

Ral Partha released their *Imperial Dragon* at ORIGINS. It measures 10" from head to tail. A limited edition, only 10,000 will be made and it retails for $50. Gee, that generates only $500,000 retail dollars.

Fineous Fingers miniatures? They were there at the *Adventure Gaming* booth at ORIGINS. Contact TIM KASK for details on how to obtain them. They are excellent.

Button seen at ORIGINS: "SPI died for our sins."

Future ORIGINS sites: Detroit MI in 1983, hosted by the Metro Detroit Gamers in Cobo Hall; Dallas TX in 1984, hosted by the people who put on DALCON every year, among others.

Busy FASA has plans for two more *Thieves' World* supplements, *Spirit Stones* and *Dark Assassin*, two *RuneQuest* modules, one of which is *Vengeance of Maksheesh* (about trolls in *Questworld*), and a couple of *Traveller* items, *Adventure Class Ships Volume 2* and *Piracy/Stardust* (Drug smuggling double adventure). They have also obtained the license to do a role-playing game based on HARRY HARRISON'S *Deathworld*, and congratulations.

Love,

Gigi

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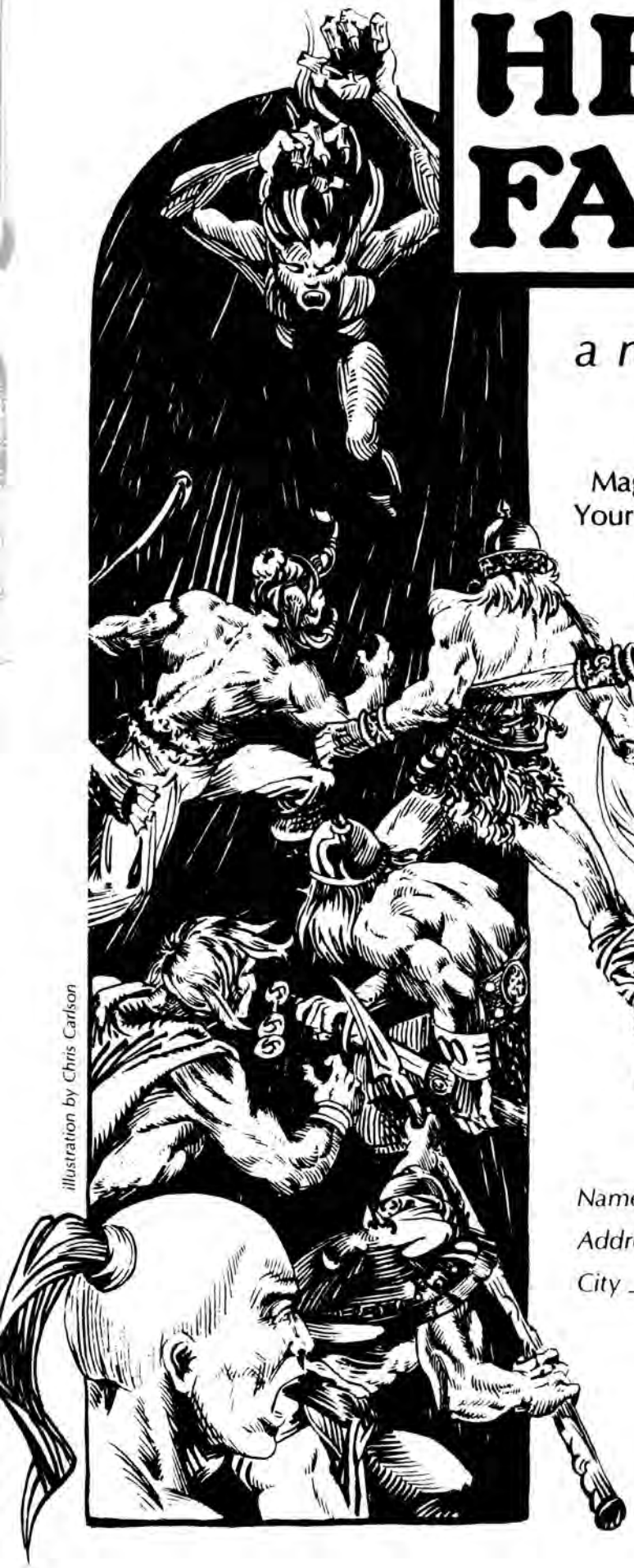
BILL EBERLE of Eon Games and GREG STAFFORD of Chaosium Inc. showing off their respective **Borderlands** *releases.*



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